



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

WIDENER



HN SXG7

C 8

MAC

FAMILIAR DIALOGUES ON SHAKERISM

C 836 8.38

Harvard College Library



**BOUGHT FROM THE
BEQUEST OF**

CHARLES STUART BOWEN

CLASS OF 1871

OF CAMBRIDGE

C. 100

60M
#26-5

③
FAMILIAR DIALOGUES

ON

SHAKERISM;

IN WHICH THE

PRINCIPLES OF THE UNITED SOCIETY

ARE

ILLUSTRATED AND DEFENDED.

BY FAYETTE MACE.

"MAGNA EST VERITAS ET PREVALEBIT."

Behold the latter day appears,
And things mysterious greet our ears,
Which seem to make this wise demand—
"Let him that heareth understand."

PORTLAND:

CHARLES DAY AND CO.....PRINTERS.

1838.

C8368.38

The Gift of Mr. Bowen, Sep. 1, 1864.

Recd Oct. 21. 1864.

TO THE READER.

THE present is an age of inquiry ; and such is the deep interest taken by all classes of people in the subject of what is termed theology, that the champions of the various sects, which divide Christendom, have almost deluged the country with their voluminous publications. It is consequently difficult for any one to enter the arena of religious discussion and avoid the imputation of vanity. Having been requested, from various quarters and respectable sources, to lay before the public, the causes which have led me to embrace my present views, I feel impelled, by a sense of duty, to gratify that wish. I desire however, in this treatise, to say as little concerning myself as possible. Egotism is always disgusting, let it come from what quarter it may ; and almost all the *journals* and *lives*, I have taken the trouble to peruse, have exhibited this contemptible weakness to such a degree, that the superficial reader, not being acquainted with their foibles and imperfections, has set them down as superhuman.✓

Our main object, in whatever we undertake, should be the glory of our Maker and the good of mankind ; and it is this consideration more than any other, that induces me, in as concise a manner as possible, to present before my former friends and the public generally, the principles of the *United Society* (called Shakers) to whose views I frankly acknowledge myself a convert.

Having been a subject of deep religious impressions at an early period of life, my inclination led me to the study of the scriptures as an infallible directory to the realms of blessedness. But as various interpretations were given to the sacred testimony by those, who professed to be divinely illuminated and commissioned to enlighten the benighted understandings of their fellow creatures, I felt it a duty to resort to those for information, who were reputed orthodox. The Calvinistic system of theology consequently engaged my attention. The "*bodies of divinity*," so called, of the most eminent writers of that order were critically perused. Having passed through the ordeal of conviction and conversion, I began seriously to meditate on the subject of the ministry ; and although my prospects were very flattering to a youthful mind, yet I could not bring myself publicly to advocate sentiments, which eclipsed the moral perfec-

tions of God, and were entirely repugnant to the dictates of enlightened reason. It is in vain for any to attempt to dispute that before the system of Calvinism can be advocated, reason, in a degree, must be dethroned, and the most palpable absurdities and contradictions must be imbibed and cherished as the truth of a holy God.

In this state of suspense, I knew not what to do or which way to turn. I could not consent to be knowingly, the instrument of deluding my fellow creatures into the belief of sentiments, which I was conscious would not bear the test of investigation. In this dilemma, the writings of Hosea Ballou, about the year 1817, providentially fell into my hands. I grasped his sentiments with avidity. His system appeared to harmonise with the divine attributes, and to be altogether congenial to the benevolent feelings of my soul. Universalism, at that period, was very unpopular, consequently there were but few, who had the independence *openly* to avow a sentiment so generally and so violently opposed. A host of relations arose *en masse*, and not only exhibited a degree of coolness, but in some instances, the most deadly animosity. I felt determined, however, to contend manfully for what I conceived to be the "*faith once delivered to the Saints.*" The success attendant on my ministry altogether exceeded my expectations. Fifteen years of my life were devoted to the propagation of those sentiments, during which time I visited most of the States of the Union, and for the most part felt the Divine protection and approbation. I preached what I sincerely believed; and always professed to be open to conviction, and to be ready to receive any "*new light,*" let it come from what quarter it might. It is not my object to enter into every minutia as to what took place in the course of so long a period of my public life. The whole is open to the inspection of Him, who invariably pursues the great end of human happiness regardless of the imperfect plans, which owe their origin to the wisdom of this world that cometh to naught.

There are many among the Universalists, both ministers and laity, whose names I shall ever hold in grateful remembrance. The generality of those who have undertaken to confute that system, have done but little else than to betray their ignorance and folly.

It is true, at this time, I felt a measure of peace in striving to live up to the best light I then had; but still I was convinced, that as an order, we were contending for a salvation which we did not possess; proclaiming the beauty, the glory and the excellency of the new and spiritual creation in Christ; proving by scripture authority, that in Adam the first, there were death and condemnation, but in Adam the second, there were life and justification. These were sacred truths; but still we occupied the ground of the first Adam, like the rest of the world, living after the

order of the flesh. Instead of following Christ, the second Adam, in the work of spiritual regeneration, we were following Adam the first in the order and work of generation; instead of taking the second man, the Lord from heaven as a pattern, and living the life of the Spirit, we were following the old Adam, who was of the earth earthy. I am astonished, that this veil still rests on the minds of so many of my former brethren. They may boast of their numbers like other orders, but it is all an empty sound. Whilst they remain in their present situation, they will be destitute of that spiritual life, that bond of union which distinguishes the true church of Christ.

The mighty collision in the religious world, in which I took some humble part, has been productive of some good; and may, in the end, be the means of introducing many into that perfect order, where union, peace, and harmony dwell. It is utterly vain for any among the Christian denominations, who boast of their numbers, to pretend that they answer to the description given by the prophets of Israel, or the apostles of the New Testament, of the glory of the latter day. They are not only at sword's points with each other, but they do not agree among themselves. In their annual circulars and minutes, they make a great display and pompous show of the wonderful harmony among them, whilst the simple truth is, many of the ministers indulge towards each other the most violent antipathies, whilst walking to what they call, the house of God together. This, for a number of years, was a source of embarrassment and inquietude to me, and I do not hesitate to affirm that there are scores of others, who have labored under similar trials. Many fine words have been used in praying and preaching illustrative of that glorious period, when "The wolf shall lie down with the lamb, and the leopard with the kid, and the steer and the fatling and the young lion together, and a little child shall lead them," not once imagining that that day has already commenced, and that these scriptures have their fulfillment in a most striking manner in that perfect church, that have come up out of the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved. Some have affirmed that were they convinced that such a people existed, they would travel to the ends of the earth to find them. I accidentally or rather providentially fell in with a family of the *United Society*, at Enfield, N. H. in the year 1831; not having the most distant desire of uniting with them, for such was my ignorance of this order, that I should as soon have thought of uniting with the Mahometans as with them. Their external order struck me with admiration, and I soon found that this was but a pattern of the internal regulations of the establishment; both bore the impress of something beyond the utmost attainment of human wisdom. I consequently felt a desire to inquire into the mysterious cause of so much beauty and harmony.

I found in the person of Elder John Lyon, one who was able and willing to give me the needed information. But when he brought up the cross of Christ in all its fulness, I shrunk with horror in the view of so frightful a precipice. I could not at once see the propriety or even necessity of so strict a conformity to the Saviour's walk. The usual and stale objections urged by the enemies of the cross of Christ were spread before him in rapid succession, and I secretly exulted in an imaginary victory. But short indeed was my triumph. I soon found that my fancied superiority was levelled with the dust. My weapons one after another were wrested from my hands, until I was left entirely defenceless, and that too, by one whom I had the vanity to look upon as much my inferior! He who undertakes to contend against the pure testimony of those in whom Christ has made his second appearing without sin unto salvation, will soon find with all his boasted endowments, that he labors under a great disadvantage; and however humiliating it may be to the proud and lofty feelings of man, it is a strait, in which many others have been brought, as well as myself, and in fact there is no salvation without it. Whilst we indulge our haughty feelings, we are in no situation to be benefitted by the gospel. We must receive the truth, if ever, possessing the simplicity and docility of children. Notwithstanding the severe discomfiture I met with at Enfield, I could see no way for me to embrace the humiliating and mortifying doctrine of the cross. I consequently laid by my *sacerdotal robes* and concluded that I would not publicly advocate any system, which came in contact with the convictions of my own mind. In the mean time I made some inquiries, to see if there were any other denomination in possession of the spiritual enjoyment peculiar to the *United Society*. I had heard of those, who style themselves "*Christians*," who made great pretensions to spirituality. Having availed myself of an opportunity to visit them, I found a number of the preachers in council, concerning one of their number, who was accused of stealing hay! Here I witnessed crimination and recrimination alternately, and became convinced that they were only a limb of the Mother of Harlots and abominations of the earth. The tremendous sacrifice, I must necessarily make in coming into the order of the new Creation, deterred me for a while from making a public declaration of my faith. For two years I labored under the greatest mental embarrassment, until I was constrained by my feelings to make known the state of my mind to Elder Elisha Pote, communicating to him the resolution I had formed, as soon as convenient to unite with the families under his care, which I did in the year 1835. He has truly proved himself to be a Father in Israel. His counsels have ever been dictated by wisdom, and I have found in

him a friend indeed, whose soul and body are consecrated to God, and devoted exclusively to the good of mankind.

Thus have I been led along step by step, until I have found the true spiritual *Ark*, in which there are protection and safety ; that spiritual *Jerusalem* which John saw in vision come down from God out of Heaven ; the city of the living God, which has no need of the light of the sun or the moon ; for the Lord God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

I have now exhibited some of the leading circumstances, which combined under the direction of infinite *wisdom* and *goodness*, to bring me where I now am. I could not consistently have written less, and I see no necessity of writing more, especially as it is my design to be as brief as possible in the illustration of the principles, which it is my object to exhibit in this publication.

I do indulge the cheering hope that my feeble efforts, as they are dictated by the purest motives, may be instrumental in producing that conviction on the minds of many, which invariably precedes the complete enjoyment of the truth in all its glory and fulness.

I know of no way, in which the principles of the *Millennial Church* can be presented with greater clearness and force than through the medium of familiar dialogues. This is an opinion, in which the most illustrious writers of antiquity have coincided as to the exhibition of the principles of truth in relation to both science and religion. The conversations which follow, are not imaginary, but have actually taken place between the writer and a number of personages at different times and in various sections of the country.

F. M.

DIALOGUE I.

B. Good morning, friend M. I have long been very anxious to see you, that I might get some information in relation to the principles of the people called *Shakers*. I am credibly informed that you have openly embraced their views, and have become the fearless advocate of their sentiments.

M. You have taken a very commendable course, friend B; for undoubtedly all the knowledge you have heretofore received has come to you through the medium of misrepresentation. The prejudice that rankles in the bosom of thousands owes its origin, in a great measure, to the false statements of those, who have proved themselves unworthy of the confidence and fellowship of the faithful and true. It is a fact beyond dispute, that most of the charges preferred against these people are those, of which the propagators themselves were guilty, and consequently lost the union and fellowship of the order.

B. It is true, the most of my information in relation to the principles and practices of the Shakers, has been received through newspaper paragraphs and observations of those, who have turned away from the order and consequently forfeited the union of the body in general; and therefore the information derived from such sources, cannot be relied on as correct. But still I am far from feeling the least inclination to adopt sentiments, which I imagine to be directly repugnant to scripture testimony and to the dictates of enlightened reason.

M. You doubtless speak truly in saying you *imagine* that both scripture and reason oppose our views; but *imagination* and *proof* are often very different in their results. You have frequently avowed in my hearing your readiness to receive light, let it come from what quarter it might. This disposition is characteristic of an ingenuous mind, and those who possess it, seldom remain stationary. Not being satisfied with present attainment, they joyfully improve every privilege calculated to increase their knowledge. But the blind bigot will "neither go into the kingdom of heaven himself, nor suffer those who are entering to go in." He zealously opposes every theory that wears the appearance of novelty. He is the creature of a blind education, and is invariably far in the rear of the light of the age, in which he lives. When such persons receive their birth in Rome, they are zealous Catholics. If Constantinople be the place of their nativity, we find them devoted Musselmens. In Hindostan, such fall before the car of *Juggernaut*, or in Egypt they sincerely prostrate themselves before the image of a calf! Had all been of this character when the gospel was first propagated, the trumpet of salvation would have sounded in vain. Immolated victims would have still been offered on the altar of superstition, and worse than Egyptian darkness

would have covered the mental firmament of the vast family of man. Consistent with the divine economy, God has progressively revealed the truth to the world of mankind, and in every age and dispensation there have been more or less who have lived up to the light of their day. From Adam to Moses, there were those, who "*walked with God.*" From Moses to Christ, many prophets and wise men were divinely illuminated and gladly looked through the gloom of types and figures, to the brightness of that everlasting gospel, through which life and immortality are brought to light. Both Christ and his apostles prophesied of another dispensation, whose glory should eclipse all that had preceded it.

B. I know that the scriptures of the old and New Testament speak of the latter day of glory, when Christ shall make his second appearance, and the knowledge of God shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. I may not live to participate in the joys of that glorious period, nevertheless I believe it will be accomplished in God's time.

M. You, with thousands of others, labor under a mistaken view of what is meant by the "*coming of Christ.*" In consequence of this misapprehension, the nation of the Jews rejected him in his first appearing, and as a necessary effect of their unbelief, excluded themselves from a participation in the joys of his kingdom. They firmly believed that the Messiah would come, as their prophets had uniformly declared it; but they looked for him to originate from some illustrious family. They supposed he would be surrounded with the paraphernalia of an earthly prince; that he would sway an earthly sceptre, and make Jerusalem the seat of a flourishing empire; that he would not only deliver their nation from their vassalage to the Romans, but also subdue the surrounding kingdoms. But contrary to all these exalted notions, the Saviour originated from an obscure family, and exhibited nothing in his manner calculated to attract the attention of the great and noble of this world.

It is not strange that the greater part of mankind are equally benighted in relation to the testimony of Christ's *second* appearing. Being altogether led by the *letter* of scripture testimony, they indulge the delusive expectation, that at some future day, Christ will appear *in propria persona*, surrounded with a retinue of angels, and exhibit in all its fulness the insignia of human greatness!

B. But do we not read in Revelation, "Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him?" "That he shall descend from heaven with a mighty shout?" I suppose that this will be *literally* accomplished. I see no reason or propriety in spiritualizing such plain declarations.

M. Your conclusion and mine are entirely at variance in this respect. Both "*reason*" and "*propriety*" are directly opposed to the common notions entertained by professed Christians in general, on this subject. The supposition that Christ will literally descend, enveloped in literal clouds, and that every eye shall see him, is as groundless a chimera as ever was palmed upon mankind. It is universally admitted by those who have but a limited knowledge of astronomy, that the earth turns upon its axis once in twenty-four hours, and that whilst its inhabitants are beholding the visible heavens on one side; the other are contemplating them in an entire opposite direction. They consequently must fail of beholding the descent of so splendid a retinue! Besides such a pompous parade would be entirely incompatible with the unassuming manner Christ exhibited in his first appearing.

B. I acknowledge there is a propriety in your remarks; but still I am at a loss to understand those passages, unless the views I entertain of them are correct.

M. But my dear friend, does not the apostle speak of himself and his associates being surrounded by a great "*cloud of witnesses*?" It was therefore in a *cloud of witnesses* the Saviour was to make his second appearance. This will appear still more clear when you are informed that *Christou* in Greek signifies *anointed*. All the *Christ* that ever was known or ever will be known, is the "*anointing power*" which appeared upwards of eighteen hundred years ago, and which has now appeared the second time in the true *witnesses*. The day, for which you have so long prayed, has already arrived, and you are called upon freely to partake of the rich blessings it presents.

B. I perceive then that one tenet of your order, is, that Christ has already appeared "without sin unto salvation." This is an idea entirely new to me. I should like to hear your arguments upon it.

M. As I never had the least reason to doubt your friendship, or to suspect your want of candor, I the more cheerfully endeavor to gratify your wish in this respect. The Saviour undoubtedly first appeared at the time appointed by the great first Cause of all things.

B. I have no doubt but what the *time* of Christ's *first* appearing was according to the divine purpose of Him, "who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." The time, manner and object of his crucifixion are clearly predicted by the prophets of Israel.

M. In this you are perfectly correct. Indeed, how could the prophets foretell an event but in accordance with the purpose of God? And the exact fulfillment of their predictions corroborates the truth of their testimony. This fact, however, does not infringe on the freedom of volition or action; nor should it be urged in such a manner as to strike at the foundation of man's accountability. Though the Jews were instrumental in accomplishing the purpose of God, by putting to death the Prophet of the Highest; yet in so doing, they brought upon themselves the just maledictions of Heaven.

B. I cannot see how man can be justly punished for acting in accordance with the divine determination.

M. The children of men do not act in reference to this. The Jews were entirely ignorant of it, according to the declaration of Peter; "Him being delivered according to the *determined counsel* and *foreknowledge* of God, have ye taken, and with *wicked* hands have crucified and slain." It is the motive that renders an action righteous or wicked, holy or unholy. Should we admit the existence of an infinite evil, the character of God could not be defended on the ground which we have assumed; and it is in vain for those who adopt such a chimerical idea, to offer their *Causa Dei* in justification of the divine Being. That the greatest possible good to mankind will result from the Saviour's passion will not admit of the shadow of a doubt. That the Jews were destined to receive condign punishment for the part they took in that tragical scene, is a truth no one will attempt to dispute.

B. I acknowledge your views to me are wholly new, and I see no reason in disputing them; they appear to be founded in scripture and reason.

M. This is but the beginning of a train of concessions you will be under the necessity of making as we pass along. There is no danger of being bewildered if we enter fully into the field of gospel truth. The person who is guided by this celestial light, will not be betrayed into error. Although "*humanum est errare*," will apply to poor lost man; yet it is because he turns from that infallible directory that leads into all truth. Whilst we walk by the river of life, and the candle of the Lord shines round about us, we need not be apprehensive of being lost in the vortex of inconsistencies. I wish now to pass to the consideration of some particulars connected, though indirectly, with the main point, under discussion. This is a weighty subject, and we cannot be too particular in its investigation. We have been speaking of the first appearing of Christ. In this, we shall perceive as we pass along, many similarities applicable to his second appearing. There were many external circumstances which combined to favor so important an event. The Romans, from small beginnings, had increased in power to such an astonishing degree, that in the reign of Augustus Cesar, their conquests had extended over the habitable globe. The land of Judea had become a province of the Roman Empire, and a general peace was proclaimed throughout the world. The wise and discerning looked upon this event as presaging the interposition of the energy of divine power, in emancipating the human mind from the thralldom of ignorance, superstition and death. It was at this era of civil history, that the Prince of Peace proclaimed liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison doors to them that were bound. Physical, generally precedes moral improvement, or else they go hand in hand. Without moral improvement, liberty is but a name, and peace in its real essence, can be experienced by none but such as obtain it by virtue of the cross of Christ.

However diversified the opinions of mankind may be as to the divinity of Christ, none will dispute but what the theory he inculcated, as to morals, was by far the best the world ever saw. But such were the predilections of the people of his day for established usages and ancient customs, that had it not been for the miracles he wrought, by which he demonstrated his Messiahship, the opposition to his doctrine would have been so general, as that but few, if any, would have received the benefit of his mission. Instead of this, the province of Judea did not bound his labors of love. His apostles were commanded to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature—and being faithful to their divine Master, they proclaimed the truth to distant lands, and were eminently successful in establishing the church of Christ on the broad basis of impartial love and boundless charity. The learned world could not resist the testimony of truth when accompanied by the energy of divine power. Clad with this heavenly panoply, the fishermen of Gallilee, when commissioned from above, could successfully encounter the champions of self-styled orthodoxy, and fearlessly expose the hypocrisy of these sanctified impostors.

The Polytheists of that day were constrained by the force of conviction to renounce their idolatrous worship, and in less than three centuries, Christianity became the established religion of the Roman Empire. It is admitted, however, by all ecclesiastical writers, that it had lost most of its original power. When it became patronized by the nobility of this world, they found it for their interest to incorporate with it many of their idolatrous notions. The original simplicity of the gospel would illy ac-

cord with the pageantry of earthly Princes, it therefore became necessary that it should be glossed over with the graces of human philosophy. The church was known by the name of Christ, but his Spirit had wholly departed from it. It became popular, but it was characterized by pride and vanity. A tissue of the grossest absurdities under the name of *Mystery*, were advanced by the pretended sanction of the scriptures. The Ministers of religion, instead of being the *servants* of the people, had become haughty and dictatorial. The Emperor of Rome became a convert to the Christian faith. Constantine saw, or pretended he saw, the image of the cross suspended in the heavens, and upon it inscribed in glowing characters the latin phrase, "*In hoc signo vincit.*" From this he took the hint of making a *wooden cross* the standard of his army. In short, this was the only *cross* that was known in the Christian church for a number of centuries. The government of Church and State became incorporated, and ecclesiastical councils assumed the *Jure Divino* of establishing articles of religious belief. Pretended Christians, instead of being persecuted, availed themselves of the secular authority, and became the most bloody persecutors. Their grand object appears to have been to establish a uniformity in religious sentiment, not by sound reasoning or mild persuasion, but by the terror of the sword. Formidable armies under the "*banner of the cross*," invaded the different kingdoms of Europe, and under the most frivolous pretences, spread devastation far and wide. These nations generally adopted the religion of their conquerors. The church gloried in the rapid advancement of her power, and congratulated herself in the supposed fulfillment of ancient prediction, "*a nation shall be born to God in a day.*"

B. Would you insinuate that at this period there was a general declension, that Christ had not a true church upon the earth?

M. No doubt at this time there was a total apostacy from the original power and simplicity of the gospel. It was a day of darkness. One horrendous gloom rested on the mental firmament of all. It was a long night, to be sure, but it was destined to pass away before the light of the Sun of righteousness. The same anointing power that appeared in Jesus of Nazareth, appeared again for the completion of man's redemption, at a time and in a manner calculated to confound the wisdom of the wise, and to demonstrate the truth of scripture prophecy beyond the shadow of a doubt.

DIALOGUE II.

B. I have been led to meditate on the subject of our last conversation, and have come to the conclusion that the church, though it passed under the name of *Christian*, was wholly destitute of the spirit of its *Divine Founder*, and consequently might be termed with more propriety, *Anti-Christian*.

M. If it is a fact that a tree is known by its fruit, we have no evidence that the condition of human nature was materially improved at the

period called "*the reformation.*" They proved themselves the lineal descendants of the Mother of Harlots and abominations of the earth. Neither Calvin nor Luther can justly be charged with hypocrisy, for neither of them pretended to act under the inspiration of Heaven in the stand they assumed. History presents us with incontestible evidence, however, of many atrocious acts calculated to brand their names with everlasting infamy. Their followers were not backward in imitating them, both in spirit and practice. They renounced, to be sure, the jurisdiction of the Pope, but it was only to become Popes themselves. They established an Ecclesiastical despotism which gave rise to the most cruel persecutions. The earth was stained with the blood of the innocent victims of their barbarity. Both the Catholics and Protestants stand equally guilty before the tribunal bar of Heaven. As each dynasty gained the ascendancy, they persecuted each other in their turn, and we have no evidence that there was a particle of the spirit of truth in either. The theory they inculcated was a medley of the grossest absurdities, and their practices were worse than their theory.

Most theological writers have zealously contended that Christ always had a true church on the earth ever since his first appearing; but it is in vain for any to think of finding it during the dark ages of which we have been speaking. It is evident from the predictions of Christ and his Apostles, that they foresaw a time coming when the order and power of the primitive church would be lost from the face of the earth; and, therefore, could not be known or found by any people whatever. Jesus expressly declared that the days would come when they should desire to "see one of the days of the Son of man," and should not see it. Then, if any man shall say unto you, "Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not; take heed to yourselves that ye be not deceived; for many will come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and the time draweth near; go ye not after them."

This prediction evidently alluded to the time of anti-christ's reign. If Christ had any true church on the earth at that time, he evidently would have been in it; because the church is his body, of which he is the head and life. Those who are the real members of Christ's body can say, in reality, "lo, here is Christ;" and such might, with the strictest propriety, be followed. But if none could say this, it is evident there was no true church on the earth. St. Paul says, "Let no man deceive you by any means, for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed." The Apostle, therefore, foresaw that there would be a *general* falling away, and that anti-christ would have his reign before the day of Christ's second appearing.

All the churches then upon the earth were counterfeits. The contention, the strife, the fraud and violence, the licentiousness, the bloodshed and persecutions which characterized the church at that day, afford incontestable evidence that Christ was not there. By an examination of the prophetic numbers given to Daniel the Prophet, those who are in the light of the present dispensation may be satisfied beyond a doubt that their testimony originated in the wisdom which is from above. When the seals were taken off, and the book of divine revelation was opened, then those predictions which were given to Daniel and afterwards renewed by Jesus Christ, and again confirmed by the Angel to John, could be understood, and not before. These things having now been revealed by the light of divine truth, can be pointed out and illustrated agreeably to an

cient prediction, and confirmed by the events recorded in history, even to the understanding and comprehension of the natural man.

In calculating the prophecies, nothing can be more emphatical to sustain the force of truth to the natural mind, than to ascertain the precise date when each event of which it is prophesied should commence or close; and perhaps nothing could be advanced better to establish this position, than a right calculation of Daniel's 70 weeks, (Daniel ix: 24.) "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy." It is proper here to ascertain when the 70 weeks commenced, in order to find at what data they closed. Here the Angel gives the date, in the next verse, as follows: "Know, therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince, shall be 7 weeks and three score and two weeks, which are just 69 weeks."

This command to restore and build Jerusalem went forth under Artaxerxes Longimanus, (See Ezra chap. 7,) 457 years before the vulgar or common Christian era, which is the date of the commencement of both the 69 and 70 weeks. This must be universally admitted, as it is established by the best Chronologists. 69 weeks multiplied by 7, the days in one week, produce 483 days or years, as in prophetic accounts. 70 weeks multiplied by 7, as before, produce 490 days or years; then by subtracting 457, the time when the commandment went forth, from 490, gives the year of the Christian era, when the 70 weeks had expired, A. D. 33, being the date when the Most Holy was anointed at the day of Pentecost; so also by subtracting, in the same manner, the 457 from 483, we have the time when the 69 weeks had expired, which gives the year of the Christian era, A. D. 26, the year Jesus was baptized of John, and the Holy Ghost or Spirit, his Mother, descended and owned him as her Son, and this Holy Spirit abode upon him, which was the unction that constituted him the true Messiah. Thus we see that in A. D. 26, Jesus was constituted the Messiah by the holy unction which then abode upon him; this finished the 69 weeks, leaving him 1 week of the 70 weeks, or 7 years, "to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy" city, the foundation of which was laid by the Messiah, A. D. 33, at the day of Pentecost, which terminated the 70 weeks. Thus we see that the above predictions were precisely fulfilled at the times stated, which cannot be denied.

The next prophecy which I shall consider, is the verse following: "And after three score and two weeks, shall the Messiah be cut off, but not for himself, and the people of the Prince that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war, desolations are determined, and he shall confirm the covenant with many for *one* week, and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease, and for the over-spreading of abominations he shall make it desolate." In order to ascertain when the date of this period, the 62 weeks commences, it is proper to consider that the Messiah could *not be cut off*, until after he commenced his Messiahship, which was, as before shown, A. D. 26,

which, of course, must be the date when the 62 weeks commenced. 62 weeks multiplied by 7, as before, produced 434 days or years, and these added to 26, the date when Jesus was anointed, makes 460, the year the Messiah was cut off, or the abomination that maketh desolate set up.

In the year 457, Pope Leo the first, ascended the throne of the Emperor Marcianus, but as he was to make a covenant with many for one week, and in the midst of the week, was to cause the daily sacrifice to cease, and set up the abomination of desolation, this brings it to 460, the middle day (or year) of the week. It may be observed, that in the three years from the time he ascended the throne, viz., to 460, he had sufficient time to fix and establish his creeds and doctrines, and promulgate them through the Christian world.

Here it may be emphatically said that the Messiah was cut off, and the daily sacrifice and oblation ceased, and the abomination that maketh desolate, set up in the year 460.

The next prophecy to be introduced here, is found in Daniel xii: 11, "And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be 1290 days," or years, which being added to 460, make 1750, the year that the desolation ceased, and the spirit of life and salvation was revived, and began to be established in that Society which was then known, and has ever since been styled by the appellation of *Shakers*, and although the days of desolation ended 3 years previous, A. D. 1747, as contained in another prophecy which will hereafter appear more fully, yet the Society in which the second appearing of Christ was about to be made manifest, was not so fully endowed with power to cast out the abomination of desolation, established by Leo, before alluded to, until the year 1750.

To illustrate this part of our subject more fully, I will recapitulate these dates.

The commandment went forth to restore and build Jerusalem under Artaxerxes, 457 years before the Christian era.

1st. In 70 weeks there are	-	-	-	-	490
From which subtract	-	-	-	-	457

Leaves A. D. 33, the year the church was anointed at the day of Pentecost,

33 years.

This completes the 70 weeks.

In 69 weeks, there are days, or years,	-	-	-	483
From which subtract, as before	-	-	-	457

Which leaves A. D. 26, the year of the Christian era, when Jesus was anointed,

26

2d. The date of the commencement of this prophecy is A. D.	26
To which add 62 weeks, or 434 days or years,	434

Brings us to A. D. 460, the time of Pope Leo's reign, 460

3d. Add to this 1290 days, or years, of desolation,	1290
---	------

This brings us to A. D. 1750, as before illustrated. 1750

The spirit of anti-christ began to appear in the Apostles' days, but many years elapsed before it gained such ascendancy as to exclude the true witnesses of God from the sanctuary.

In the year 457, the Emperor *Marcianus* died, and Pope *Leo* the I. first came into full possession of his unlimited power. From this time he ruled both Church and State with unlimited sway. The power of his successors was established above that of all earthly Princes; and by their authority creeds were established to regulate the faith of the whole Christian world. The persecutions which followed to enforce obedience to their bloody religion evidently mark this gloomy period as the "*days of desolation*." The year 457 was the period in which commenced the unlimited reign of anti-christ. The closing period of this reign may be clearly ascertained by reckoning from the date of the vision of the Prophet Daniel. "How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot. And he said unto me, *Unto two thousand and three hundred days*, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." The date of this vision is 553 years before Christ; and allowing 2300 prophetic days to signify so many years, we have the time from the date of the prophecy to the cleansing of the sanctuary. Take 553 years from 2300, we have 1747 for the year of the Christian era, when a death blow should be given to anti-christian power.

The duration of the reign of anti-christ is also given in another vision which confirms the preceding calculation. "And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a *thousand two hundred and ninety days*." These are with propriety called "*days of desolation*," and signify so many years. Add 1290 to 457, the time of their commencement under Leo the first, we have 1747 for the year in which the days of desolation were to end.

B. This is a fair calculation, and if I had the inclination, I have not the ability to confront what you have said. You, without doubt, meant to convey the idea or establish the position that these visions had reference to the first founders of the United Society to which you belong.

M. You are perfectly correct. They could apply to no other event. This will still appear more clear from another part of the same vision: "Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days;" these 1335 days added to 457, make 1792. In this year the Millennial Church was established in its principles of order and government, in which it has continued to increase to the present day.

In Rev. ii: 1, 2, 3, we have the following testimony: "And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the Angel stood, saying, Rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple, leave out and measure it not: for it is given unto the Gentiles; and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. *And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophecy a thousand two hundred and three score days*," "*clothed in sackcloth*." The measuring the temple of God, without doubt, had reference to the period of time during which, the order and worship of the primitive church continued; that is, while they separated themselves from the course and friendship of the world. Such and such only can worship in the inner court. During the gloomy reign of anti-christ, God had his witnesses; they were called two witnesses, because

they appeared in the order of male and female, and pointed in their testimony to the two great dispensations of the gospel under the first and second appearing of Christ. They were to prophecy 1260 years, *cloathed in sackcloth*. This period commenced in the year 457, when anti-christ had attained his unlimited power. By connecting these numerical numbers, it will bring us to the eighteenth century, the time in which the witnesses were to prophecy, cloathed in sackcloth or mourning. Christianity, during the time of their prophecy, retained none of its original simplicity and power, otherwise it would have been a time of rejoicing instead of mourning. "In the year 1717, the rights of man or liberty of conscience began to be understood, and many illustrious writers fearlessly came forward in their defence. *Peter the Great*, Emperor of Russia, established liberty of conscience throughout his extensive empire. His edict, which he had been twenty years in completing, was dated January, 1721."

From this period the principles of civil and religious liberty continued to gain ground in other parts of Europe, and the civil governments were gradually divested of all power to take life on account of religious sentiments. The witnesses of truth enjoyed the free exercise of their religious faith; nor could the priesthood of the established churches prevent the declaration of their testimony to the people. The two witnesses were ardent in their expectations of the second coming of Christ, and often testified by the spirit of prophecy that it was near at hand. This was evidently preparatory to the ushering in of the latter day of glory. We are irresistibly led to draw the conclusion that the 42 months, in which the holy city was to have been trodden under foot by the Gentiles, expired about this period. The 1260 days as before noticed allude to the time in which the witnesses were to prophecy in sackcloth. They both commenced at the same time, but point out two different events. In 42 months there are 1278 days. The treading down the holy city commenced in 457, which added to 1278 make 1735. This brings us to the closing period of anti-christ's tyrannical reign. Liberty of conscience not only favored these witnesses, but it immediately preceded the establishment of uncorrupted truth. It should have been observed that these witnesses were slain by the beast that ascended out of the bottomless pit; but this could not happen whilst they held their testimony. It is a fact established by ecclesiastical history that they attempted to establish churches; but in accomplishing this object they adopted many of the most erroneous principles of the Roman hierarchy, the consequence of which was, they lost the spirit of their testimony, were slain, and the enemies of truth rejoiced over them. But about 1735, "The spirit of life from God entered into them and they stood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon them which saw them." They reappeared in the life and power of their testimony and rose above the "power of anti-christian tyranny and all its corrupt principles."

The cleansing of the sanctuary was, however, the work of time. Anti-christ held too many strong holds to be routed at once. He has contended for every inch of ground. There is nothing that more excites his alarm than the progress of spiritual knowledge. Darkness is his element, and he looks upon *light* and *truth* as his most formidable enemies. It is for this reason that a formal, lifeless priesthood have been uniformly opposed to free inquiry. This has been their character in every age of the world. Instead of leading the people to the waters of

the river of life, they concentrate their powers to sink them deeper into the quagmire of ignorance, superstition and bigotry. Such has been their conduct in Europe not only during the "dark ages," as they are called, but at every period of time since.

They have always been partial to a state religion, consisting of an arbitrary civil government and ecclesiastical despotism. These church dignitaries have ever been fond of holding councils and prescribing articles of religious belief for the people: and where they could avail themselves of the State authorities, no stone has been left unturned to effect a uniformity as to religious sentiment. Instead, however, of drawing the people by sound reason and mild persuasion, they have driven them by the terrible thunders of the *Vatican* to yield an unreserved acquiescence to their mandates. The most cruel despots that ever disgraced humanity have uniformly had a priesthood, who have gone hand in hand with them in all their enormities. In fact, the one could hardly exist without the other. But at the period of which we have been speaking, this unnatural *Monster* received an incurable wound. And although he may long struggle for life, yet his funeral knell will surely be sounded. God has decreed it, and it certainly will come to pass.

As many concurrent circumstances favored the ingress of the Saviour in his first appearing, it is equally evident that the important changes of which we have been speaking, presaged the dawn of another glorious day in which Christ, or the anointing power should finish the work of complete redemption, and permanently establish a living temple, where God should be worshipped in the beauty of holiness.

B. I have listened with cheerfulness to your remarks, and am convinced beyond a doubt, that the cleansing of the sanctuary and the restoration of the daily sacrifice was to have taken place about the time you have mentioned: but before I can adopt your sentiments, or be made to believe that the *Millennial Church* or *United Society* is that pure and holy Temple, I must have further evidence.

M. I would not wish you to embrace my views, unless your understanding is convinced; but as you are ready to yield to the force of evidence, I indulge the hope that the same convincing proof that was satisfactory to my mind, will also be to yours. The first appearing of Christ "was to the Jews, a stumbling block, and to the Greeks, foolishness." It is no less so to similar characters in the second. The idea that the anointing power appeared in a *female*, and that she, in her order, stands at the head of the new *Creation* as a co-worker with Jesus Christ in completing the work of full redemption, is looked upon as extremely foolish, I will acknowledge, by such as are distinguished by that *wisdom* denominated in scripture, "*the wisdom of this world that cometh to naught.*" But to those who are saved by this gospel, it is both the *power* and *wisdom* of God.

DIALOGUE III.

B. Your last remarks to me have been a subject of deep meditation; and I am at a loss to conceive what you meant to convey, by the suggestion that the *anointing power* appeared in a female, and that she jointly stands with Jesus Christ at the head of the *New Creation*. Although I am satisfied that Christ has commenced his reign on the earth in the sense in which it was declared he should by the Prophets of the Old, and the Apostles of the New Testament; yet that he appeared in the *female* to whom you refer, is liable to many formidable objections.

M. You must admit, friend, that the old creation that pertains to nature, is an appropriate figure of the new. Most, if not all Christian denominations, believe that Christ appeared to establish a new Creation. This spiritual work is expressed by the terms *regeneration, born again, &c.*, but among all Christian orders, we find none that have found the lot of the female, if we except the *United Society*. It must appear evident to the smallest capacity, that in the order of nature, there can be no birth without the co-operation of male and female; and yet there are many who profess to be regenerated and born again, but spurn at the idea of acknowledging a Mother in the work of regeneration.

B. I now perceive the propriety of your remarks, and am astonished that the idea never struck me before.

M. The reason is obvious. The systems of divinity which have heretofore engaged our attention, abound with absurdities, among the most glaring of which, is the hypothesis of a trinity of males in the God-head, all engaged in the work of regeneration; and notwithstanding their power jointly and severally is supposed to be infinite, yet it is believed by many that they will come far short of regenerating the world! I have read the most celebrated commentators on the scriptures with but little or no benefit. They contradict each other, and evidently bend the scriptures to favor their respective sentiments. They "darken council by words without knowledge." Scott, Gill and Clarke were eminent for their literary acquirements, to be sure, but they were evidently warped by the prejudices of education and by the influence of party views. The three great denominations to which they belonged resort to them as an infallible standard. As the ancient Grecians placed the utmost confidence in the Oracles of their famed Apollo, these professed Christians believe that knowledge both began and ended with the champions of their sects.

The windings of the serpent are plainly discoverable in these commentaries. Whenever Gill presented a passage which militated against Calvinism, he could satisfy his party by presenting a different version from some old manuscript more favorable to his views. When the Arminian finds a passage in the sacred oracles not altogether in accordance with his favorite notions, he receives assistance from Clarke. In short, I look upon these champions as being more instrumental in perpetuating error than building up the cause of truth and righteousness.

The views which I have presented to you will doubtless be opposed by those whose creeds have been formed by these leaders, and who depend more on the *Ipsæ Dixit* of these commentators than on the scrip-

tures themselves. I am far from viewing the present received translation as being in all respects, correct. The translators, both in the division of the chapters as well as in rendering the Greek text into English, committed some of the most egregious errors. The fact is, however, that most of those who have undertaken to correct them, have been very cautious how they corrected those passages, which in the purity of the original, would condemn their own peculiar tenets. In short, it is utterly vain for any to look to the writings of the different leaders of the various denominations that divide Christendom, for correct theological instruction. They speak as great a variety of languages as did the builders of Babel, and are not only confounded themselves, but they confound all who look to them for instruction.

B. I have long been convinced that the different religious sects with which I am acquainted, are very far from being Apostolic, either in theory or practice; and for this reason I sought this interview with you. It has proved a blessing to me thus far; and could I be convinced that you are the order which was predicted should be established in the latter day, I see no reason why I should not embrace your views; but I should like to hear some further reasons why Christ should appear in the female.

M. The first appearing of Christ was, in short, the revelation of the Father; so that in fact the Father is first in the order of the new creation, and the Mother is the second, and is the glory, wisdom, and perfection of the Father. In the first and second appearing of Christ, we see the Son and Daughter in whom the Father and Mother are both revealed through the influence of the (Logos) or word proceeding from both, who are one in essence, nature and union—but two in their office and manner of operation. Neither the attribute of Father or Son, Mother or Daughter, existed from eternity, but derived their existence from God in the order of the old creation and new. At the beginning of the new creation the Son of God declared that he was in the Father and the Father in him.

Moses wrote the history of the *natural* creation, but the Evangelists gave us the history of the *new*. They were witnesses of the miracles of Christ from the beginning, and having received the (Logos,) or word by which the foundation of that world was laid, they were created anew by Christ Jesus who is said to be "*the beginning of the creation of God.*" This could not have reference to the old creation, but the new. Adam was the head of the first creation; Christ who is the "*second Adam,*" stands at the head of the new, of which the first is but a type, or figure. As Christ revealed the Father, and in this sense was one with him, so the "*called, the chosen, and the faithful,*" were one with Christ, and in this we discover a bond of relationship infinitely more pure and holy than that which is natural. The one is destined to be dissolved, the other will grow stronger through eternity. The one is changeable, the other is ever enduring. The one is but a mere spark, the other a flame that reaches the highest Heavens. The one is founded in selfishness, the other originates from the inexhaustible source of light and love.

There is a natural body, and there is also a spiritual body; and as there is a natural birth to the natural body, so there is a spiritual birth to the spiritual body; this is called regeneration or the new birth. "*The first Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.*" The living soul of the first man was a spiritual body, and occupied the natural body of the first Adam. The quickening spirit of the second

man was the Lord from heaven, and occupied the spiritual body of the second Adam, and constituted the first spiritual man, the true Christ, the anointed of God. Christ's natural body was seen with the natural eye, but his spiritual body was invisible and could be known only by revelation, to those who received the *Word*. By this we may understand the meaning of the declaration, "*No man can call Jesus Lord, but by the the Holy Ghost.*"

It is easy to be perceived from this that there would be as much propriety in calling the dust of the ground the mother of the first living soul, as to call the Virgin Mary the real mother of Christ. It is true, Jesus of Nazareth came from the body of Mary the wife of Joseph, in which the true spiritual body of Christ was formed, but this constituted no higher relation between Mary and the second Adam, the *quickening spirit*, than was between the dust of the ground and the first living soul.

Adam was created in the image of God, and constituted in himself both male and female; for the woman as a help and companion was taken from his side; but in the new creation, spiritually, they were to be blended into one, so that we discover a beauty and propriety in the Apostle's declaration, "There is neither male nor female, there is neither bond nor free, *but ye are all one in Christ.*" This is the only union that the Gospel acknowledges, as no other is compatible with its purity.

We observed before, that in the Son was the revelation of the Father; so in the Daughter, is revealed the attributes of the everlasting Mother of our redemption. The same anointing power was manifested in both, and by them communicated to their faithful children, or followers. From them is derived every spiritual blessing. The Daughter completed what the Son commenced; although we acknowledge the Son to be the first in order, and consequently the head of the body, the church; yet in this family, the female raised to her lot, is co-operating with the male in the offices of this holy Priesthood, so that in the church militant we discover a pattern of the order of the heavenly or invisible world. And as it is the province of the male in the order of nature to *provide* for his household, so it is the province of the female to set the household in order, and dispense the provisions thus provided. It is evidently the province of the female in the work of regeneration to dispense that *word* which our Saviour said should judge every man at the last day, and also to regulate and set the household of Christ in gospel order.

It is therefore said of those who faithfully fill their places in this mystical Temple, "Ye are come to mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of Angels; to Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel, and to God the Judge of all."

B. This surely appears reasonable, and I frankly acknowledge that there appears to be the utmost propriety in the female being placed in her lot in the great work of salvation; but I am by no means convinced, that the female, you call *Mother*, was the chosen instrument of the Almighty to fill that station.

M. I am glad to have you come directly to the point, and wish you to present your objections in the strongest manner possible. I would not wish you quietly to yield your prepossessions, but carefully to examine every part of this testimony, being satisfied that when your judgment is convinced, you will have the candor to acknowledge it.

B. I know it is not proper to argue merely for the sake of argument. Our grand object should be to gain or communicate instruction. It appears, however, to me that the female to whom you look as the anointed instrument in the hand of God, of establishing the *Millennial Church*, is not entitled to that honor. I have been informed that she possessed no literary accomplishments—that she could not even read.

M. What you have suggested may be true. I do not pretend that either she or the elders that stood with her were very eminent for their learning; but this, to my apprehension, does not militate against their testimony, but directly the reverse; it strengthens my mind in the persuasion that they were under the inspiration of the Almighty.

You may easily perceive that the same objections might be, and indeed were urged against Jesus Christ and his Apostles. Jesus Christ was the son of a carpenter, and at the age of twelve years we find him disputing with the learned Doctors of that day, in the temple. His replies to them excited their astonishment, not on account of his learning, but the wisdom he exhibited on that occasion. His wisdom was of a celestial source. No doubt he was brought up at the trade of his Father, and did not enjoy the benefits of a common education. His chosen associates were unlearned, with but a few exceptions. And yet these unlearned men were eminently successful in propagating his doctrine in every direction.

It is a fact recorded, that not many noble or mighty, of that day, were called. The very objection you have presented, places you in a similar situation with the most bitter opposers of Christ and his Gospel, a Gospel which did not originate from the wisdom of the learned, but from the power of God. I do not hesitate to say, that we have as satisfactory evidence that the first founders of the *United Society* were inspired of God, and were as much instrumental in establishing a new dispensation, as that Christ and his Apostles did. View it in what light you please, the evidence is as clear and conclusive in the one case as the other.

B. I cannot make myself believe that my feelings are in unison with the ancient opposers of Christ and his Gospel, though I must confess that the same argument was brought against Christ that I have presented against *Her* in whom, as you profess to believe, Christ has made his second appearing.

But I have heard a variety of charges impeaching *Her* moral character, which, if true, is a sufficient reason why I should not adopt your views.

M. So far am I from considering these slanders as an objection to my views, that I look upon them as an evidence that she was what we firmly believe her to be, the "*Anointed of God*." Blessed are ye when men shall say all manner of evil against you *falsely*, for my name's sake. Point to any charge brought against Mother, and the Elders with her, and I will point you to similar ones brought against Christ and his Apostles, and there was equally as much foundation for the one, as the other.

Do you suppose that a body of people could have been kept together and prospered, as these have, when, at the same time their leaders give themselves up to the illicit indulgence of every sinful propensity? Besides, such conduct would be diametrically opposite to the sharp testimony they daily bear against every impurity in thought, word and deed.

B. But Christ demonstrated the divinity of his mission by a variety

of miracles calculated to convince the most incredulous, that the mighty power of God was with him.

M. Very true, and I would wish you to understand, that Mother and those that were with her in the ministry, possessed many miraculous gifts, which, on a variety of occasions, were exercised in a manner calculated to confound the most determined opposer. These gifts are still in the church, being transmitted to their successors; nor will they cease, whilst the life and power of their testimony continue.

B. Why is this not more generally known? I have frequently heard that many of your order *profess* to have the gifts of miracles; but it is generally doubted that they in reality possess them.

M. These doubts were as generally entertained in relation to Christ and his apostles; but are we to infer from this, that they did not possess them?

B. We surely are not. We have, however, the testimony of the four Evangelists, in confirmation of the former. They were eye-witnesses to them, and therefore could not be deceived.

M. I cordially agree with you in this. They differ in phraseology in relating these miracles; but they come to the same conclusion. There was no combination formed to impose on the credulity of mankind. We have more than *four score* who were eye-witnesses to the miracles of Mother and those who were with her in the ministry; yet the world have the impression that the whole is a delusion.

B. I must have evidence to my senses, that what you assert is true, or I cannot believe it. It is my opinion that miracles ceased with the apostles. Indeed, there is no evidence, that there have been any miracles in the Church since.

M. How then can you believe that Christ or his apostles performed any miracles? They never were made evident to your senses. That miracles ceased when the church apostatized from her original principles and practices, I have not the least doubt. But when the true Church revived from her long slumber, miracles revived with it. When the Mosaic dispensation commenced, it was accompanied with extraordinary miracles. When the Gospel dispensation was established, miracles revived, different in kind, but the same in their nature. The different denominations of professed Christians do not reject the Gospel *professedly*, though the miracles wrought in its first establishment were very different in kind from those attributed to Moses; yet because a literal dead person has not been restored to life by any belonging to the Millennial Church, many draw the inference that they do not possess the gift of miracles.

I contend that the first establishment of this order was nothing short of a miracle. View the different sects that divide Christendom. They received their origin from some distinguished leader, noted for his learning or eloquence. See the voluminous writings of a Calvin or Wesley; both noted to be sure, for their *learning*, if not for their piety. They carried with them a commanding influence, and consequently without even the pretence of any very extraordinary manifestations, succeeded in rearing a huge fabric, composed, in my opinion, of such heterogenous materials, that it is destined to fall under its own weight. The bond

that unites these orders is very different from the Gospel bond. They often pretend to a great deal of love and union ; but when they are seen as they really are, it is found to be *pretence* only. Let them be taken at their own word. They frequently acknowledge this to be a fact. With all their pretensions—with all their learning and professed piety, they are wholly unacquainted with what is implied by "*pure gospel union*."

I hope not to be charged with drawing invidious comparisons. I am sustained by the power of all conquering truth in what I assert. The Millennial Church, in its origin, progress and present standing, presents to the gaze of an astonished world, a continued succession of miracles. Moral power does not consist so much in numbers as *union*. This is the only *real* strength of any community. If we take this as a standard, there is no *body* of people on the face of the globe that present such a formidable aspect. You would sarcastically insinuate that this beautiful order, originated from an *illiterate female*. Do you not perceive that such a suggestion goes to establish the very idea for which I am contending ; *that this testimony did not originate in the wisdom of this world ?* There is such an exact similarity both as it relates to the characters that were eminently distinguished in establishing this community, and all the circumstances attending every stage of it, with those connected with the propagation of the gospel in the days of Christ's first appearing, that I am astonished it does not strike conviction to the soul of every one, who looks into it. I have been satisfied from personal observation, that the gifts of healing, of prophecy, of tongues, and of discerning spirits, together with many others, are in this body.

B. Why then have not these extraordinary circumstances been exhibited to the world ? Why have mankind at large been kept in ignorance of the existence of these facts ? I have been of the opinion, that these gifts would be restored in the Millennium, but did not in the least suspect that any order now possessed them. I find myself singularly embarrassed. There is no objection I have presented to your views, but what places me in a similar situation with those who opposed Christ when he was upon earth.

M. I shall still avail myself of the same advantage. Why were mankind ignorant of the miracles of Christ ? Why did "Herod, Pontius Pilate, the people of Israel and the Gentiles," conspire to take his life ? Why did these same characters resist the testimony of the apostles after his crucifixion ?

It was some time after this, that the four Evangelists wrote their gospels, and from them we gather the information, that Christ enjoined secrecy on those who were eye-witnesses of his miracles. It has not been the practice of those who are in the light of this dispensation, to blazon to the world these supernatural operations. Could these be made evident, even to the *senses* of those who are blinded by the god of this world, it would perhaps have no tendency but to excite the most violent opposition. I have no doubt but it was the *same* spirit that induced the Jews to attribute the miracles of Christ to *Demonical* agency, as that which excited the mobs in the first days of our faith, to the most violent opposition. Those extraordinary operations, which they could not understand, they pretended to look upon as witchcraft.

Persecution always arises from the same source. The persecuted *may* be wrong, but persecutors cannot be right. All orders have suffered persecution more or less ; but all cannot be right, inasmuch as they oppose

each other. I would observe, however, that the spirit of meekness and forgiveness exhibited on the most trying occasions, by the first founders of this order, demonstrates beyond the shadow of a doubt, their sincerity, and stands, as a complete confutation of the base insinuation of their opposers ; that "*they were a combination of imposters, whose only object was to lead their deluded followers into the vortex of error and impurity.*"

Whoever takes the trouble to compare the circumstances attendant on the ministry of Mother, with those, which are recorded as connected with the first establishment of the gospel by Christ and his apostles, will at once discover a striking similarity.

B. I acknowledge the reasonableness of what you have said. The very origin of the *United Society*, is calculated to stain the pride of man. To receive the testimony of a woman, and an illiterate one too ; to receive her as first in her order, and meekly to listen to her instructions, is an idea so degrading to the lofty imaginations of man, that I can hardly bring myself to it.

M. The truth is, most of professed Christians often transport themselves, with the delusive thought that they love Christ ; when in fact the Christ they love, was an imaginary beautiful person, that distinguished himself about eighteen hundred years ago by numerous acts of benevolence and kindness. They can give you a minute description of his person, his complexion and the colour of his eyes and hair!

The person of Christ, abstractly considered, is of no importance more than that of any other individual. The saving power, revealed in him, should be the object of our veneration. The person of Ann Lee, was no more than the person of any other female. The power to save from sin, that was revealed in and through her, is that which we should venerate and love. Christ, or the *anointing power*, that appeared in *Mother Ann*, is still in the church, and governs all its proceedings. And every faithful member manifests his love to Christ, by yielding an implicit and cheerful obedience to the order and regulation established by it. It is through this heavenly channel, that all the gifts and blessings of this celestial order, flow. This is the mysterious cause of that love, harmony, union and prosperity which have long excited the admiration of the world.

In relation to the work of the latter day, we find in the scriptures many figurative allusions to two correspondent powers, or pillars in the church of Christ, which refer to the influence of male and female in the work of redemption. We read of "the *two anointed Ones*, which stand by the Lord of the whole earth ;" the two cherubims, whose wings covered the mercy seat above the ark ; the two tables of the covenant ; the two silver trumpets ; two trees on either side of the river of life, and many others.

By the *two anointed Ones*, is undoubtedly meant the union of both male and female in the work of reconciliation, "and the council of peace is between them both." The two silver trumpets strikingly prefigured the heralds of salvation in the order of male and female, who are chosen to preach the everlasting gospel, proceeding from the two *anointed Ones*.

In many of the parables of the New Testament, mention is made of the lot of the female in the great work of regenerating the world. "The kingdom of Heaven is like unto a certain king, who made a marriage for his son." None need mistake the application of this parable. It is admitted on all hands, that Christ alluded to himself as the *Bridegroom* ;

but who is the bride? If it be contended that it is the church, we would again ask, Who are the guests? They must be such as are invited to attend the marriage of the Bridegroom and Bride. It would be very singular indeed, for a bridegroom to take all the guests, both male and female, and call them his bride! Again, "for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." The church here could not be intended as the bride. The "great multitude that rejoiced because the marriage of the Lamb had come," is more applicable to the church.

B. St. Paul says, "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." 2 Cor. xi: 2. This he said in reference to the church. It was evidently his opinion, as plain as words can express, that the church was the bride.

M. The bride was here spoken of in a figurative sense. The church was the body of Christ. I observed before, that Adam had a body containing the substance of both male and female, before Eve was taken from it. Christ had then been manifested in the male only. The time had not arrived for the female to be placed in her proper order; therefore the apostle was under the necessity of speaking as he did. Both the spirit and the bride have now been revealed. In Rev. xii: 17, we have this subject brought to view with such clearness, that none need misunderstand it. "The Spirit and the Bride say, come. And let him that heareth say, come. And let him that is athirst, come; and whosoever will, let him take of the waters of life freely."

B. This invitation, it is believed by all expositors, issues from Christ and his church—

M. Stop a moment. All expositors must be wrong then. Those who hear, have reference to the church. "*Let him that heareth, say, come.*" Those who hear, are distinct from the Spirit and Bride, from whom issues the word of life. They all agree, however, in calling the sons and daughters of affliction freely to come and partake of the rich blessings of the gospel of peace.

As before observed, in the Bride is the revelation of the everlasting Mother; but in the Bridegroom, we discover the attributes and perfections of the everlasting Father. In the Father and Mother, Son and Daughter, there is an indissoluble union. That Christ acknowledged no other relationship than this, is evident from the following circumstance. Jesus went with his parents to Jerusalem to the passover. They found him with the doctors in the Temple, "hearing and asking questions." His mother said unto him, thy Father and I have sought thee sorrowing. But he gave her to understand that she was no more than his supposed mother. When she stood without, desiring to speak to him, he said, "*Who is my Mother?* and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples and said: Behold my Mother, and my brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of *my Father* which is in heaven, the same is *my Brother, and Sister, and Mother.*"

With regard to the conception of Christ, it is said to Mary, "*The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee.*" Here are two incomprehensible terms mentioned, which imply the whole order of the *Divine Majesty*—*The Highest and the Holy Ghost*. The name *Jesus* in the original, signifies *power, Christ* is a name significant of his office. In the Son is an exhibition of the

divine power. In the Daughter is the revelation of the perfection of wisdom. These existed with the *Eternal Two* in all their fulness before the "*Morning stars sang together, or the sons of God shouted for joy.*" Wisdom is presented in the feminine gender, by the pen of inspiration, as a "Tree of life to them that lay hold on her, and happy is the one that retaineth her." The Lord by *Wisdom* hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens."

"She standeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths. She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors; unto you, O men I call, and my voice is to the sons of men."

"I, Wisdom, dwell with *prudence*, and find out knowledge by witty inventions. The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; pride and arrogancy, and the evil way and the froward mouth do I hate. Council is mine and sound Wisdom. I am understanding, I have strength. By me kings reign and princes decree justice. By me princes rule and nobles, even all the judges of the earth."

"I lead in the way of righteousness; in the midst of the paths of judgment; that I may cause those that love me to inherit substance, and I will fill their treasures. The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning or ever the earth was."

"When there were no depths I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth; while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world."

"When he prepared the heavens I was there; when he set a compass upon the face as the depths; when he established the clouds above; when he strengthened the fountains of the deep; when he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandments; when he appointed the foundations of the earth. Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him, rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of men."

"Now therefore hearken unto me O ye children; for blessed are they that keep my ways. Hear instruction, and be wise and refuse it not."

DIALOGUE IV.

B. I must confess there are a consistency and beauty in your views, which I never saw before. It is astonishing strange, that theologians, with all their learning and researches, have not been able to discern so important a truth, and one, too, so clearly revealed in the scriptures.

M. It was not consistent with the divine purpose, to reveal this to the wise and learned of this world. Such, generally, are the last to embrace this testimony, not on account of its obscurity or inconsistency,

but because it strikes at the foundation of those lofty imaginations, which have characterized the haughty and vain-glorious, in every age of the world. Such were uniformly organized against Christ and his gospel. They could not *condescend* meekly to receive instruction from the *fishermen of Galilee*, who, in their estimation, were unlearned.

The present testimony is opposed by similar characters, and they make use of the same weapons; but their efforts are all ineffectual. They may as well raise their polluted hands, and vainly attempt to blot out the sun, as to arrest the progress of the work of God. They may vent their rage in persecution, but this invariably gives a new *impetus* to that cause which they hope to destroy. Such were their characters, and such the means to which they resorted in the first dispensation of the gospel; and there is no want of a *will*, but (thanks to the genius of our free institutions) they have no *power* to effect their diabolical designs in the present day of increased light and glory.

B. I perceive, from what you have suggested, that you consider your order as under a new dispensation, superior to all that have preceded it. I look upon these pretensions as very extraordinary, and therefore, before I can embrace your views in this particular, I must have the strongest evidence.

M. Should you take the trouble to review the evidences, which I have presented for your consideration, of this being the order which the prophets foretold should be established in the latter day, to the correctness of which, you have frankly yielded your unqualified assent; you will at once see that there is no impropriety in calling it a "*new dispensation*." And as it is a fact universally acknowledged, that every succeeding dispensation prior to it, has been accompanied with increased light; you must acknowledge it reasonable, that the light of this dispensation, is greater than that which has preceded it. We have the most substantial evidence that this is absolutely the case. This is not problematical. We know what we affirm to be true.

Every dispensation, in which it has pleased God to reveal himself to mankind, has had a Ministry or Priesthood. Under the legal dispensation, Aaron was the first High Priest, and from him, there was a succession confined to the tribe of Levi, and from this circumstance, it was called the Levitical Priesthood. It was through this Ministry, that God communicated moral instruction to the house of Israel. Whilst this ministry were faithful to live up to the light they had, they were blessed, and the nation was blessed with them. But when the Priesthood became corrupt, the nation became corrupt with it. The people could not receive the consolations of the word of life through an impure channel. A state of moral darkness consequently succeeded. During this long and dreary night, God raised up a succession of Prophets, who pointed their testimony against the Priesthood and people. Zephaniah called Jerusalem "*the polluted city*," her Princes, "*evening wolves*;" her Judges, "*light and treacherous persons*;" and accused her Priests of "*polluting the sanctuary, and of doing violence to the law*."

The house of Israel was in this deplorable state, when Christ, or the anointed of God, appeared. When the gospel dispensation was established by Christ, it was in connection with a new Priesthood, or Ministry, and whilst they went forth in the life and power of Christ's testimony, the powers of darkness receded before them. Every spiritual gift was communicated by Christ to the apostles, and by them to the

faithful believers of that day. In the house of God, there is the most perfect order. Peter seems to have been selected by Christ as his successor. In the spirit of his divine Master, at the day of Pentecost, he portrayed the character and conduct of the Jews, with such force, that we are told they were "*pricked in the heart*," and cried out in the agony of their souls, "*Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?*" Here, the Holy Ghost fell on the believers, and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. A union of interest prevailed, and the word of God was successfully preached, and the prejudices of man was but an ineffectual barrier against the banner of all-conquering truth. Such was the prosperous condition of the Church, when it moved in union with the spirit and power of its Divine Founder. We have already taken a cursory survey of its gradual decline. It has always had a Priesthood; but in spirit and doctrine, it became blended with the world. It consequently lost its original power. Like an *incubus*, its ponderous weight rested on the vitals of mankind, without the inclination or ability, to move a finger, to dissipate the sable gloom which itself was the chief instrument in producing.

The holy City, for a long period of time, was "trodden under foot of the Gentiles," and the "abomination that maketh desolate, was set up." During this long and dreary night, God frequently sent forth his witnesses, who, in the power of a living testimony, warned the Priesthood of their degeneracy, and foretold, that the day of reformation was approaching,—that Christ was about to set up an everlasting Kingdom of righteousness and peace on the earth. God's ways are not as our ways; neither are his thoughts as our thoughts. The establishment of this Kingdom was contrary to all human calculation. That the Almighty should miraculously endue a female with supernatural gifts, and in her, revive the pure testimony of eternal truth, is altogether unaccountable to a formal and corrupt priesthood. The Scribes and Pharisees were equally astonished, that the Messiah should not have originated from their *Sanhedrim*. The learned Doctors of that day, would hardly stoop to receive instruction from an *illiterate Nazarine*, or be corrected in their religious views, by the fishermen of Gallilee!

Our reverend divines and learned doctors, have been instrumental in establishing *Universities, Colleges, and Theological Seminaries*; but what are they but sectarian establishments, under sectarian influence? And what is the consequence? Our country has been invaded by these voracious Locusts. The *learned Ministers* that issue from these *seats of learning*, instead of "feeding the people with knowledge and understanding," have substituted "*vain philosophy*," for the pure principles of unadulterated truth. Clad with the sable gloom of mystery, they spread over the most delightful parts of our country, peddling out their merchandise to those who will give them the most ready cash. These are the characters that are the most zealous and persevering, in their opposition to the simple truths of the gospel. Such are fond of pre-eminence, and are the last to consecrate their powers to the erection of the temple of spiritual knowledge.

In the establishment of this dispensation, those who were called to the work of the ministry, had to contend with spiritual wickedness in high places. The persecutions they had to endure, were put in motion by the inveterate malice of the champions of self-styled orthodoxy. They have ever been the last to join in the work of God, and the first to cor-

rupt it. But few of these dignitaries have united in the glorious work of the latter day; but this, I consider one of the strongest evidences of its truth.

In this order, the ministry is established by the appointment of God. We have no Theological Seminary—and we need none. It does not require the refinements of language, to give power and lustre to gospel truth. It would be like daubing on paint, to give additional beauty to the rose. The history of ages confirms us in this opinion. Several protestant denominations possessed some life and power, in their commencement; but as soon as they established theological schools, they dwindled into formality. Note preaching is now common among the Baptists and Methodists, and the consequence is, the *Gifts* of God are neglected, and even despised. To them, it is of more importance to please the ear, than to affect the heart.

These Seminaries are said to be established for the benefit of "*Indigent and pious young men.*" I think that the term *lazy*, would be more appropriate; and most of these young men become *pious*, for the sake of the privileges of these establishments. Do they not take the lead in the vain fashions of the day? It is difficult to decide from their costume, whether they belong to the pulpit or counting-room!

I do not hesitate to say, that such a ministry is not of God's choosing. They are neither of God, nor blessed of him. I wish to contrast these with the *United Society*. The difference is too obvious not to be noticed by every beholder. The fact is, the one is the ministry of light; and the other, of darkness. The foundation of the one, was laid by man, and is sustained by the wisdom of this world, that cometh to naught; but the other is established "on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." The latter, is destined to continue *in perpetuo*; the other, will share the fate of every human establishment.

B. If you are in the light of a new dispensation, your views of the ministry, or priesthood, must, of course, be correct.

M. This being admitted, there can be no protection, or salvation, out of the order which God has established. To this ministry, there must be an honest and full confession of sin, and a strict conformity to the regulations of God's house. May the blessings of Heaven attend you; and may you not only *resolve*, but be able to carry that resolution into effect, to come directly into the *door*, and thus fully enjoy all the privileges and rich consolations peculiar to this happy fraternity.

DIALOGUE V.

B. In our last conversation, I was not a little surprised to discover by your closing remarks, that before any can enter into the enjoyment of the privileges of your communion, there must be an honest confession of sin, to those too who are established in the order of ministers and elders.

I never conceived it necessary to confess my sins to *man*, and therefore before I submit to that, I must have the most convincing proof of its correctness.

M. As you have given repeated evidences of your readiness to receive truth when presented with sufficient clearness to your mind; I am the more encouraged to enter fully into an examination of this weighty subject. The consideration, that the *confessing* and *forsaking* of sin, are absolutely indispensable, in order to come into the *new creation*, renders it necessary that we should correctly understand the extent of the divine requirement in this respect.

B. I have no doubt but what it is required of us to confess our sins to God in secret; but I have not the most distant idea that it is our duty to confess them to any of our fellow mortals.

M. This is an error, fraught with the most pernicious consequences. It is one too, which generally prevails among protestant churches.

B. I have been told that the Catholics confess their sins to the priesthood; and from this consideration, I cannot say that I have not imbibed a prejudice against the idea; nevertheless, I am willing to hear what arguments can be offered in its support.

M. So, then, because the *Roman Catholics* hold it essential to confess our sins to the priesthood, Protestants must spurn at the practice! It would be much more consistent to reject their errors, and cordially to embrace the views entertained by them, that harmonize with the scriptures, as well as with the dictates of the Spirit of truth, in every age of the world. Because this forms one article of the Catholic's faith, many consider themselves justified in ridiculing the scriptural doctrine of *confessing sins*!

The generality of people have no disposition to examine the scriptures in relation to this subject. It is a Roman Catholic doctrine, and this is a sufficient reason why it should be rejected. The religious community become bewildered at the first starting point; and from this they travail through their *whole course* in one continued maze of error. The Protestant denominations have become clamorous against the Catholics; but in the fear of God, I state it as my soul's belief, the former have embraced the most destructive errors of the latter: whilst they hold up the excellencies of the Catholics as a subject of derision and contempt! I have no doubt but what is termed "*auricular confession*," among the Catholics, has been perverted, and that the devotees of that church have been grossly imposed upon by a corrupt priesthood; but this is no evidence that their views of the *mode* of confessing sin, are not both scriptural and reasonable.

I am at a loss to account for the gross ignorance so generally prevalent among professed Christians on a subject so clearly revealed in the scriptures, and so evidently dictated by the operation of the spirit of truth upon every enlightened soul. Neither the contemptuous sneers of a time-serving priesthood, nor the railings of the ignorant and abandoned, should deter us from an unequivocal avowal of our sentiments, when we are assured that the good of mankind requires it.

It is this consideration that induces me to enter fearlessly upon this subject, being fully aware of the host of opposition against which I must contend. But I neither fear the enmity nor covet the friendship of the ungodly world. Their smile is the smile of deceit; and all their malice

will recoil upon their own heads. I foresaw that the adoption of these views would be at the expense of every thing the world calls good and great. It is a sacrifice which the gospel requires, and one which every soul must make sooner or later, or never participate in the joys of the *New Jerusalem*.

B. Would you insinuate, that before my soul can rest in heaven, I must make the killing sacrifice you have described? But few indeed will be saved, if this be true.

M. I am far from limiting the Holy One of Israel, or setting bounds to the triumphs of his grace. "With God all things are possible." The scriptures present us but one door of entrance into the celestial City. There is but one way, and Christ has declared himself to be "*the way*." It is the way of self-denial and the cross. The wisdom of this world has invented a variety of ways, but they are ways to shun the cross. It is too great a cross to confess our sins to the Witnesses of God; and therefore it is found most convenient to confess them in secret. But I would ask you one question in this case: Are they in this manner brought to light?

B. To be sure. To confess them to God, is bringing them to light.

M. How does this mode bring them to light? Were they not opened to God before? Confessing them does not bring them to his knowledge. The apostle says, "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, but with the *mouth* confession is made unto salvation." If a secret confession of sin to God be acceptable, what has the *mouth* to do with it? When we communicate our thoughts to each other, we make use of our mouths; but the Almighty stands in no need of this mode of communication; nor is it implied in the passage above cited.

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but he that confesseth and forsaketh them, shall find mercy." But how can our sins be covered from God? They may be concealed from man, and this is undoubtedly what was meant by the prophet. This being admitted, it is equally evident that the confession should be made to man.

I would by no means contend that an indiscriminate confession should be made to persons without regard to moral character. It is only in the order of God's appointment that confession should be made. And in every dispensation, God has had an established order to which an oral confession has ever been considered indispensable.

B. I perceive, from your remarks, that you consider the Old Testament and New, in favor of your views of an oral confession of sin.

M. To be plain with you, I look upon the Bible as establishing this position beyond the shadow of a doubt; and before this interview closes, you will be constrained to acknowledge it.

The first proof in support of this position which I shall cite, is the case of Achan—Joshua vii. 19—26. "And Joshua said unto Achan, Give, I pray thee, glory unto the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me what thou hast done, hide it not from me. And Achan answered Joshua, saying, Indeed, I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done."

Joshua then stood in the order of the divine appointment; and confession could be made to no other person to God's acceptance. This was bringing transgression to the light, by openly confessing it to one of God's witnesses; and we may look upon this as demonstrating the an-

cient manner of confessing sin according to the established order of the Deity. If this is not proof to the point under discussion, I know not how language could be put together to establish it.

B. This appears to be conclusive evidence, to be sure; but still I cannot see the propriety or absolute necessity of confessing sin to God's witnesses, as you will acknowledge they have not the power to *forgive* transgression.

M. Neither you nor I have a right to introduce a cavil of this description. It is enough for us to be convinced that it is the established order of God. I will acknowledge that it is the prerogative of God to forgive sin; and it is in this way that the evidence of forgiveness is presented to the human mind.

B. But forgiveness in the case of Achan was not extended; but "all Israel stoned him with stones."

M. This was uniformly practiced under the law in cases of wilful transgression. The valley where this transaction took place, was called the valley of Achor, (or of trouble.) This throws light on a passage in Hosea ii. 14, 15. "Behold I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the *Valley of Achor for a door of hope.*" This has reference to the work of Christ in the latter day. The confession of sin is the *door of hope* under the gospel. The manner of confessing is similar under the law and gospel; but under the gospel, forgiveness is invariably experienced. It is therefore emphatically termed by the Prophet, "*a door of hope.*"

Another evidence equally clear in relation to the subject under discussion, is presented in the tenth chap. of Ezra, where the Jews were commanded to make confession of their transgression, especially in relation to their having taken strange wives in the time of the Babylonish captivity. There were several at that time appointed to receive their confessions. It appears that both the time and place were designated. "Only Jonathan, the son of Asahael, and Jahaziah, the son of Tikvah. were employed about this matter, and Meshullam, and Shabbethai the Levite, helped them. And the children of the captivity did so. And Ezra the Priest, with certain chief of the fathers, after the house of their fathers, and all of them by their names, were separated and sat down in the *first day of the tenth month*, to examine the matter. And they made an end with all the men that had taken strange wives by the *first day of the first month.*"

It appears from this quotation, that this confession occupied precisely three months; whereas, had they confessed according to the practice of many in the present day, they could have opened the whole budget in three minutes! Can there be the shadow of a doubt, but what an oral confession was made to the witnesses of truth on that occasion? And what more substantial proof can you desire in confirmation of the Old Testament manner of confessing sins?

It would doubtless have been more congenial with the natural feelings of the people of that day, to have been more *secret* in that transaction; but the fact is, deeds of darkness must be exposed to the light of day. They must be exposed to those who stand in the light. I would not contend that they should be proclaimed to the surrounding multitude; but to those who are chosen of God to stand in that lot.

Immediately preceding the establishment of gospel truth by the Son of God, we are informed that John came preaching in the wilderness, warning the people to repent; for the kingdom of heaven was at hand—and that all Judea, and the region round about Jerusalem, went out, and were baptized of John, in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. This was about the close of the law dispensation, and consequently, the confession was made in conformity to the practice of that day. In short, they confessed their sins to John. The Saviour passed a eulogium on John, more honorable from the consideration of a source from whence it came. He pronounced him the greatest of all the prophets; but still, John considered himself but merely the harbinger of *One*, to whom he viewed himself as unworthy to perform the meanest offices. An honest confession of sin, and a uniform course of obedience became indispensable as an induction into the kingdom of Christ. The Saviour declared positively, that he had power on earth to forgive sin; but confession invariably precedes forgiveness. He communicated the same power and authority to his apostles, that he himself possessed. He called them the "light of the world." "Ye are the salt of the earth." "He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me." "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." Again he says, "As my Father hath sent me into the world, even so send I you." As God is omnipresent, nothing can be covered from him or uncovered before him. In Acts xix. 18. And many that believed came and *confessed*, and *showed their deeds*. They confessed and showed their deeds to the apostles, who were the light of the world. To this light they confessed their sins. This was the order of God established in that day; and no candid person will deny but what the whole circumstance was inconsistent with the idea entertained by many that a confession in the desert or in secret, is all that was then required.

An oral confession of sin appears to be dictated by the spirit of truth in its operations on the human mind. It is very common for criminals condemned to execution to confess their crimes to some confidential friend, and not unfrequently before the immense assemblage whom curiosity leads to witness the tragical scene. In short, it is generally believed that there are few so hardened in iniquity, and insensible of their condition as to resist the impulse to the last. The few exceptions that have occurred afford sufficient evidence to many minds that such are innocent.

B. This is a consideration that never occurred to my mind; and I must confess that it is a very strong evidence in favor of your views.

M. The protestant clergy are very violent in their prejudices against this doctrine; but still their own conduct is inconsistent with their profession. Contrary to what they avow as their real sentiments, they have established, unwittingly, oral confession in their own churches. Whenever a member of their communion is *detected* in an immoral action, (and such occurrences happen very often) the person criminated is required to make a confession before the *whole church*. In which case, on promise of amendment, he or she is received into the communion of the body as usual. But this occurs only where the persons are exposed to the scorn

of the public. All *hidden* iniquity can be covered over and confessed to God or not, just as the person chooses!

There is no authority either in the old Testament or New for *such* a mode of confession. But in this they have accidentally come into the *neighborhood* of truth. As they are a body without a head, there can be no centre of union nor harmony of movement. I have known repeated instances of individuals, under the operation of conviction, expressing a desire to open their minds to some one, but were derided for their supposed folly by those who professed to be teachers! There is no necessity, said they, of your confessing your sins to any individual. To confess them to God in secret, is all that is required. I have, said the convicted person, and found no relief. I am weighed down by my sins, and can find no deliverance in the way you prescribe.—The truth is, the preachers themselves have not come in at the *door*. They are ignorant of the way themselves; how then can they teach it to others? The blind are leaders of the blind, and both are immersed in the ditch of error. They have what they term *order*; but it is not the order of Christ. They are often successful in alarming the conscience, but fail in pointing the soul to that *door* that opens to heavenly rest. The gloomy presages, caused by these gloomy preachers, often produce delirium; and I seriously question the *good* they pretend to be the result of their labors.

They never confessed their sins in the established order of God, nor even do they pretend to be saved from sin. They profess to believe they shall be saved hereafter, and even have the arrogance to claim *eternal salvation* as a *reward* of this *faith* and *hope*! I repeat it, how can such *apostles* point out a way in which they never travailed themselves? And what must be the moral state of those who look to them for religious instruction? How often have I heard confessions like these,—“When I look into my own heart, I discover nothing but a *sink of pollution*; a cage of unclean birds. I am a slave to the indulgence of every passion, inclined to every evil, and averse to every thing that is good.” “Well, brother, well sister, (replies the minister,) this is an evidence of your good estate. ‘T is light that discovers darkness.’ ‘T is the candle of the Lord that leads *us* to this discovery. Some hold that *we* can live without sin; poor, deluded souls, I pity them. Brothers and sisters, we must look to Christ, and have faith in his righteousness. This precious garment will *cover* all our pollution. Your *experience* (says the preacher) and mine, exactly harmonize. We are all by nature, in the same quagmire. Tell about crucifying the old man with his deeds; ‘t is all arrant nonsense. We live by *faith*. Christ has done all this for us.” This is about the substance of what they know. This confession may be sincere; but in most cases, it is hypocritical, and should they be represented by others in the same light in which they represent themselves, ten to one they would prosecute for defamation.

B. There surely is satisfactory evidence that there is something radically erroneous, in the theory and practice of the denominations with which I am acquainted; and I am rather inclined to the opinion, that they cannot be patched up; but it will be difficult to make them believe that they must come to your order, before they can obtain salvation.

M. They can be saved only in the order of God. To his order, they must come; and to it they will come sooner or later. Naaman, the Syrian, was required by the Prophet to wash in the river Jordan, in order to be cured of his leprosy. Why not wash in the rivers of his own

country? The river Jordan was the boundary between the land of Canaan and the wilderness. The Israelites, necessarily, had to descend and pass this river before they could possess the promised land. This is an appropriate figure. Before we can enter into the enjoyment of heavenly rest, we must confess our sins in the order of God's appointment. We must wash in the river of judgment, to be cleansed of spiritual leprosy.

We have the testimony of all who have honestly confessed their sins, and entered into the door of the sheep-fold, that it is the path of salvation. I do not call upon you, or any other individual, to walk in a path that is not safe; or one, in which I do not walk myself. Many fondly anticipate salvation, whilst they are willing slaves to their passions, and please themselves with the assurance, that the righteousness and obedience of Christ, will be imputed to them, though they indulge themselves in the "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." May you be led to the consideration of the importance of the subject of our present conversation; and may we both resolve to follow the dictates of truth, however cutting it may be to our carnal inclinations.

DIALOGUE VI.

B. There can be no doubt of the correctness of your views, as to the proper *manner* of confessing sin; but I perceive, by several hints you have given in the course of your observations, that there is more implied by the "*cross of Christ*," than I ever imagined.

M. The *cross of Christ* is, indisputably, of broad signification. It has been modified by a corrupt priesthood, of a corrupt age, in such a manner, as to retain but little of its original force and meaning. Its practical influence became proportionably less. In natural things, it is evident that the sacrifices we are obliged to make, are invariably proportionate to the magnitude of the object we have in view. It requires a great expence, to fit out a ship for an India voyage; nevertheless, the immense profits which accrue, are a sufficient inducement to the undertaking. Mankind are universally engaged in the pursuit of happiness; and the generality think to attain to the object, by arriving at the summit of riches, honor, or sensual pleasure. For these, they are willing to sacrifice their ease, and to expose their lives to the most imminent danger. To obtain riches, they are willing, for months, to remain immured in a fragile bark, exposed to the dangers of the tempestuous ocean, and to visit distant and unhealthy climates, far from friends and home. For the sake of honor, how many fearlessly face the cannon's mouth, and eagerly press their way to fame, amidst the clangor of arms, and through fields of blood! O, vain, and inconstant man! Bubble of every delusive shadow; vainly pursuing the fleeting joys of this inconstant world! Sensual pleasure is the last, though not the least, of the darling objects of which the giddy and thoughtless multitude, are in eager pursuit. In short, every other object is subservient to this. Even the most

successful, come far short of obtaining the prize. They are led along by an *Ignis Fatuus*, till they become satisfied that they are in pursuit of a shadow, that continually eludes their grasp. Where is Cræsus, with all his immense riches? Where is Julius Cæsar, and where is the great Pompey, who contended for the Empire of the world, on the field of Pharsalia? They are all gone.

The cross of Christ requires a full surrender of all these darling objects. But such as conform to it, are the only ones that receive durable riches and righteousness. The laurels of an Alexander, or Buonaparte, are but weeds, in comparison to the laurels obtained by those who govern their passions, by a strict conformity to the *Cross of Christ*. This is an honor that comes from God only. The contrast, between the one who subdues his carnal inclinations, by taking up the cross of Christ, and the one who subdues Kingdoms and Empires, is immense. The one, like a sluggish snail, is confined to earth; whilst the other, like the towering eagle, soars among the clouds, and dwells among the sunbeams.

I have known many, who firmly believed that they had taken up the cross, by merely carrying a gold, silver, or brass cross, suspended to their necks! Some consider it almost exclusively, as consisting in speaking, in a public assembly! There is no question but what many have experienced a blessing, for a season, in unburthening their minds, in this manner. Such triumphs are of short duration. There is an inward monitor that continually reminds them of passions unsubdued, and of the necessity of more circumspection, both in words and actions. In short, the grossest ignorance prevails in the churches of anti-christ, in relation to this, most weighty of all subjects. And why is it so? They have the New Testament; and the ministers profess to be the public expounders of its doctrines. There is no subject exhibited, with equal clearness, by Christ, or his apostles; and yet, there is so little said about it by public teachers of religion, that there appears to be almost a total ignorance in relation to the import of it.

Jesus Christ considered the cross of the utmost importance. He held a conformity to it an absolute condition of discipleship. This subject is presented to us with the greatest clearness, by the Saviour. It is comprehended in a few words, and the smallest capacity may understand it,—“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.” “For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it.” This short sentence comprehends the whole. A person, of ordinary intellect, may understand the requirement in its fullest extent. 1st. We are required to deny self. 2d. To take up the cross that Christ took up. 3d. To follow Christ, by walking in his footsteps. Is this unreasonable, or impracticable? This was the order which Christ established, and on this foundation, the primitive church was built. To deny self, is to deny all selfish gratifications,—“*The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.*” The cross of Christ which we are commanded to take up, comprehends all this; and without it, we have no authority to claim the name of Christians.

B. Do you mean to imply that all sexual intercourse is forbidden?

M. Without doubt, this is positively forbidden as inconsistent with the purity of the Saviour's life. I would not, however, insinuate, that there was any express command, to this effect. But still, to follow

Christ in the regeneration, utterly forbids the gratification of "fleshly lusts which war against the soul."

B. This is the most cutting of all. Before I adopt this sentiment, you will have many formidable objections to answer,—more, I think, than you will be able to meet. Nothing short of the most powerful conviction, can bring me into an order, which imposes such severe restrictions.

M. I would not wish you, nor any other person, to adopt my views, without conviction. But I mistake your character, if you do not yield to the force of evidence, however directly it may cross your prepossessions.

B. I do not know what the result may be in such a case; but I have but little reason to believe you will satisfy my mind, on this point; and, to tell the truth, I feel a desire that you may not answer the objections I shall bring, altogether to my satisfaction.

M. I perceive the coilings of the serpent in your very expressions. I am glad to see him roused up. This testimony breaks up the fountain of iniquity. In removing a dead carcass, the vermin that feed upon it, are generally disturbed. The cross of Christ would not be so offensive to many, if consistent with it, they could gratify *one darling propensity*. This "*Man of sin*," does not like to be disturbed. He contends for every inch of ground, and does not leave his seat, till forced by one that is stronger than he. I wish you to present the strongest objections in your power, and they shall have their full force. The truth of God is on my side; and no weapon formed against it, can prosper. Goliath, of Gath, though covered with mail, fell prostrate before the stripling of Israel; and should you be slain in this engagement, "*You will die to live, and live to die no more.*" Had I been governed by my natural inclinations, I should not have listened to the testimony of truth, though presented with the clearness of light, and the plainness of demonstration. But by its overpowering energy, every "*refuge of lies* was swept away," and I was ferreted from every "*hiding-place*," to which my natural propensities impelled me to resort. And it is my belief, should you yield to the force of evidence, you will be driven to the same extremity.

B. I have not forgotten the pledge given at the commencement of this interview. I shall strictly adhere to it, to the very letter. And, should you convince me of the truth of your testimony, however crossing it may be to my natural inclinations; I will embrace it, both in theory and practice.

M. This is a laudable resolution. Without it, there is but little use arising from any discussion. It is natural for man to invent excuses for impure, and even criminal indulgence. Therefore the person contending for this testimony, according to the vulgar saying, has the laboring oar. Ancient authorities, both sacred and profane, as well as the customs and usages of by gone ages, are eagerly sought for, to countenance the gratification of lust. And even the professed followers of Christ are the most clamorous advocates of this beastly indulgence.

B. I would not, knowingly, contend for *criminal* indulgence; and still it is a fact, I am at a loss to conceive how the gratification of lust can comport with purity. In this argument, I labor under a disadvan-

tage. I am endeavoring to support a practice which shuns the light of day. I have not that confidence which I otherwise should have ; but yet I believe there is sufficient evidence from scripture and reason, in favor of natural generation.

M. I commend your candor, and would seriously ask, whether it is reasonable to conclude, that such a work is compatible with the purity of the gospel ?

B. We have the express command of God to "increase and multiply, and replenish the earth." Was it not the design of God, that the earth should be peopled by natural generation ? And is it a sin to conform, in this respect, to the divine command ?

M. I would answer, Is it reasonable to suppose, that God would command us to perform an impure act ? You have voluntarily expressed your embarrassment. You should not attribute this to me, but to the cause you are endeavoring to sustain. I know where you stand, and the cause of your want of confidence. You are contending for that which your conscience tells you is killing to the life of the spirit.

B. But would God command us to do what has a tendency to such a result ?

M. By no means. It is the command of a holy God, and was made to Adam in the day of his innocence. It was given to Adam before Eve was taken from his side. "So God created man in his own image ; in the image of God created he him ; *male and female created he them.* And God blessed them ; and God said unto them, *Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it.*" Gen. i : 27, 28. Had Adam acted up to the dignity of his nature, which was pronounced good, as coming from the hand of God, in fulfilling this command, there could have been no transgression ; but instead of this, the faculty of generation was corrupted at the very fountain, and brought into subjection to the inordinate passion of lust, a passion which still maintains, in the natural man, its power and influence. Instead of acting from the pure desire of propagating his species, and conforming to the times and seasons that nature prescribes ; man's chief motive has been to gratify his lawless propensities. This is a truth that bids defiance to contradiction. It is confirmed by the testimony of every rational being, from the beginning of the creation, to the present day. From this circumstance, it is easy to ascertain the nature of the divine prohibition. The whole circumstances relating to the first apostacy, are highly figurative. The garden of Eden, the tree of life, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil, are the same now that they were then. That person must be very benighted, indeed, who supposes that the garden of Eden was a literal garden, or that the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil, were literal trees. Is it rational to believe, that Eve was tempted by a snake, to reach forth her hand and pluck the fruit from an apple tree, or any other tree ? Such an animal, we should suppose, would be the least likely to tempt a woman *successfully*.

The curse denounced on the woman is illustrative of the nature of the transgression. "And the Lord God said unto the woman, what is this that thou hast done ? And the woman said, the serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." And unto the woman he said, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception ; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children, and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."

Adam and Eve were both naked when they stood in their innocency, and were strangers to the sense of shame; but after they transgressed, they made an ineffectual effort to hide themselves. "They knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons." Why did not the sense of shame fall on the hand that plucked the fruit, or the mouth that ate it? They covered the seat of the transgression; and all their posterity, from a similar cause, have done the same.

B. I am wholly satisfied that your views, as to the nature of the transgression, are perfectly correct.

M. To be consistent, then, you should acknowledge that generation is excluded from the new creation; nor can those who are engaged in that work, be considered the real followers of Christ. Or would you contend, that instead of following Christ, in the regeneration, we should follow old Adam in sinning in *perpetuo*?

B. But what would become of the world, should all adopt your views and live in accordance to them, in this respect? The earth, in about a century, would be unpeopled. I look upon this as a necessary consequence of the universal adoption of your views. I cannot, therefore, see my way clear to come into your order.

M. Should all engage in war, and continue the strife, the earth, in a short time, would be unpeopled; and yet, I do not know that any seriously object to it, on account of the earth being depopulated. Thousands and tens of thousands may be slain in battle, and yet there are no apprehensions that the world, in consequence, will come to an end; but if here and there an individual embrace the cross of Christ, by "crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts," the "*hue and cry*" is immediately raised, "*the world will come to an end.*" I do not mention this to answer your objection any otherways than to show that it does not arise from the apprehension that the world, in reality, will be void of inhabitants. I would now put a question to you, and expect a candid answer. Did you enter the marriage state from the pure motive of propagating your species; and was this the only incentive, by which you were urged to take upon yourself the burthen of a family?

B. This is a home question, I will acknowledge; and, as I cannot use deception, I must confess that, *that* was not my predominant motive.

M. There is not an honest man on the face of the globe, who would not give a similar answer. This confession demonstrates, to my mind, that it is not so much the fear of the world coming to an end, that this objection is so zealously urged, as the apprehension, that a period must be put to *sensual gratification*. You have expressed a sentiment, in some part of this interview, that in the millennium, generation would cease, as incompatible with Christ's reign on the earth, or with the purity of those who reign with him. This is a sentiment generally adopted by commentators; but so clung are they, in general, to the works of the flesh, that should that glorious day arrive, according to their views of it, they would be among the foremost to oppose it. According to their theory, and according to your own concession, the world must come to an end.

Many profess to believe, that the world is destined to be consumed by fire; and by it, the wicked are either to be annihilated, or to suffer

its flames, *ad infinitum*. And yet, the more rational conclusion, that it will be brought to an end by the work of regeneration, is spurned at as irrational, and the greatest fears are hypocritically expressed, that the world will come to an end. You, perhaps, may say, that this does not answer your objection. I will acknowledge it; but still, I am prepared to meet it with all its force. On so weighty a subject as this, there should be no equivocation.

B. You must acknowledge, that should all come into your order, cities, in time, would be without inhabitants; and the most beautiful parts of the earth would become a dreary waste.

M. Many great and populous cities have become depopulated, in consequence of their wickedness; and what once constituted the very heart of the Assyrian monarchy, is now an uncultivated wilderness. I am of the opinion, that this beautiful country will yet be peopled by a race far different from its former inhabitants. You have, in fact, *supposed* a miracle, and urged it as an objection to my views. It is a fair principle in all controversy, to make use of the weapons of an opponent, to his disadvantage. I have a right to suppose another miracle in answer to your objection. God can people the earth in any way that he chooses, and that, too, consistent with his holiness and purity.

B. Have you not acknowledged, that it was the design of God to people the earth by ordinary generation? Is it reasonable to suppose, that he will deviate from his original design?

M. The attention reverts to the ground we have passed over. Had man conducted, in this respect, agreeably to the design of God in the beginning, it would have been a holy act, and consequently, would not have been productive of shame. It is like, that produces like. Instead of peopling the earth with a race of murderous Cains, our first Parents would have generated an offspring in their own image, pure and holy. Whoever examines the New Testament with respect to the order of the new Creation, will perceive that the end of the world came upon those who were lively stones in the Temple of God. Not the end of the (*Kosmos*) literal world, but the end of those darling objects, that engross the attention, and occupy a prominent seat in the affections of the giddy multitude, "*The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.*" Those who walked not after the flesh, but after the spirit, were crucified to these. These were the "*rudiments of the world,*" to which Paul considered himself *dead*.

If by ordinary generation, you mean to convey the idea, that the gratification of lust, whether sanctioned by a legal ceremony, or not, is designed of God as the approved method of generating offspring, and peopling the earth, I deny it, *in toto*. All must acknowledge, that mankind, as it relates to the gratification of the flesh, are very far from acting in reference to God's glory. The professed Christian may put on a sanctimonious air; but in this, he is governed by the same impulse, with the confirmed libertine. Both consider darkness indispensably necessary for the accomplishment of a work, for which they imagine they have the command of a holy God. And, in fact, I consider darkness an appropriate figure to represent a work, that invariably shuns the light of day.

B. Are we not informed, by one of the Evangelists, that Christ attended a marriage feast, in Cana of Gallilee, and, as a token of his

approbation, turned water into wine? This affords satisfactory evidence to me, that he did not view this subject in the light in which you have presented it.

M. The Saviour, on a variety of occasions, associated with the "*children of this world*;" but are we to infer from this, that he countenanced their peculiar practices? Marriage and the work appertaining to it, belong to that world, to which both Christ and his apostles, were crucified. I do not pretend, that *either* expressly condemned it, in the order where it belonged.

B. There appears to be more consistency in your views, than I at first imagined. But still, the Saviour would not have given his *signal approbation* to a work, unless it had been a *good work*.

M. I would ask, where you get your evidence of *signal approbation*?

B. The first evidence is, he attended the Marriage.

M. He associated with publicans and sinners; but do you suppose that he countenanced their evil practices?

B. I certainly do not; but Christ, on that occasion, turned water into wine. This is an additional evidence, that he cordially approbated the marriage.

M. It is said, that it was the usual practice to bring the poorest wine after the guests had "*well drunken*." Why should we not infer from this, according to your logic, that he countenanced intemperance?

B. There is something to be considered in this, I confess. I have always looked upon this case, as a very strong circumstantial evidence against your views of Christian celibacy.

M. We are informed for what *object*, "this beginning of miracles" was performed; not to approbate the works of the flesh, or to countenance the foolish ceremony by which it is pretended to be *sanctified*; but to manifest his *glory*, that his disciples might believe on him.

B. This puts quite a different light upon the subject, to be sure; and, though it tends to weaken my objection, it does not fully answer it. There is no evidence, taking the whole circumstances together, that Christ exhibited any token of disapprobation; but rather the reverse.

M. This was prior to Christ's entering on his public ministry, although, on a variety of occasions, he had given proof of his supernatural powers. There is satisfactory evidence of this in one "*circumstance*," which, perhaps, escaped your notice. "And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, they have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, "*Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.*" He did not say, Mother—but Woman! What have I to do with *thee*. The hour is yet to come, when I shall strike a death-blow to the world with all its rudiments. This was the death that Christ died; and it was through this death, that he destroyed him that had the power of death.

The natural Mother of Jesus appeared to be very officious on that occasion; and I appeal to your decision, whether the reply of Christ is not the language of reproof. A certain Deistical writer construes this as an evidence of a want of common courtesy, and draws the inference, that Christ was "*grossly impudent to his own mother!*" I readily acknowledge, that there would be too much truth in the above satire, pre-

viding the Saviour "*graced this marriage feast,*" as a token of his cordial approbation.

B. I was in hopes you would have been satisfied with the concession I made; but you have fairly turned the circumstances connected with this first of miracles, to my disadvantage. I am satisfied that this does not militate against your views. I have, however, another objection, which I consider unanswerable. St. Paul, in his epistle to Timothy, ch. iv: 1—3, says, "Now the spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils;—*forbidding to marry,* and commanding to abstain from meats." It appears that this applies to your order with all its force; I should like to hear what you have to say upon it.

M. You say that this prediction applies to the United Society, "*with all its force.*" It applies to some order that, in addition to "*forbidding to marry,*" commanded to "*abstain from meats.*" Can you say, that the latter clause applies to "*our order?*"

B. It surely does not.

M. According to the prediction of the Apostle, it was evidently the same persons that *commanded* to abstain from meats, who forbade to marry. It therefore, by your own acknowledgement, cannot apply to this order. The very words, "*forbid,*" and "*command,*" presuppose authority to enforce what is forbidden and commanded. Will any one pretend to say, that the *United Society* ever used such authority, or resorted to coercion, in any shape, to increase their numbers? Sound argument and persuasion, are their only authority; and faith and conviction, are the only incentives to the adoption of sentiments so directly opposite to the very source of carnal enjoyment. It is, therefore, a matter of choice, and not of force, that we have come to Christ, by strictly following him in the regeneration. The prediction of the Apostle, cannot apply to this order by any fair construction.

This prediction will apply, with all its force, to the church of Rome, if we understand it in a literal sense. One of the most celebrated writers on church history, has this remarkable passage. "As long ago as the year 386, Siricius held a council of eighty bishops, at Rome, and forbade the clergy to cohabit with their wives. This decree was confirmed by Innocent, at the beginning of the fifth century; and the celibacy of the clergy was fully decreed by Gregory VII, in the eleventh century; and this hath been the universal law and practice, ever since." Mosheim says, that Pope Gregory, in the year 1074, assembled a council at Rome, in which it was *decreed*, "that the sacerdotal orders should abstain from marriage; and that such of them as had wives or concubines, should immediately dismiss them, or quit the priestly office." From these extracts, it appears that, at a very early day, the dignitaries of the church of Rome, by a formal edict, "*forbade to marry,*" so far as it related to the priesthood. But this was altogether compulsory, and, without doubt, was designed to maintain the appearance of purity. It is presumed that a remnant of the apostolic doctrine was preserved, notwithstanding they had essentially departed from its original simplicity and power. It does not require the agency of an earthly mandate, to build up the church of Christ. The huge fabric which has long passed by the name of the *Christian church*, owes its origin to this source; and, consequently, the "fruits of the Spirit, which are love, joy and peace in

the Holy Ghost," have never been realized. The church has been the theatre of discord and strife; and the ambitious and unprincipled, have invariably, stood the best chance for preferment. It is pretended by the Catholics, that their Popes, or Fathers, have retained the keys of the kingdom of Heaven, from St. Peter down to the present day. Christian celibacy, or the appearance of it, has been enjoined upon the priesthood, as well as upon the females, called Nuns, who bind themselves under a perpetual vow to withdraw from the world and all its enticements. Their principles, so far, may be good; and from the circumstance of this order being established at so early a date, we have strong presumptive evidence, that it originated from Christ and his apostles.

The United Society have ever considered marriage, a civil right, sanctioned by the laws of the civilized world; and in no case have they ever interfered with it. St. Paul could not allude to those who, from conscience, live a life of continency. In such a case, his prophetic spirit would have condemned himself, who, all will acknowledge, set an example of strict celibacy. Although we consider it a duty to bear the cross of self-denial, yet we resort to no coercive measures to restrain others from the full indulgence of their carnal pleasures, and consider a married life the most suitable, for the attainment of such an object.

The established fasts, including what Catholics call *lent*, in which they are *commanded* to abstain from meats, all protestants have looked upon, as establishing the prediction of the apostle. But here, the Protestants have brought themselves into the same condemnation, by uniformly observing "*days of fasting and prayer*," in strict conformity to the maxims of "*the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth*." It is said that Alexander the great, was deformed. His admirers and flatterers assumed the same deformity, by carrying their heads upon their right shoulder. The protestants have closely imitated their mother, in all her deformities, whilst they are so regardless of her excellencies, as to present nothing but deformity, from head to foot.

The Catholics have adroitly warded off the charge brought against them by the Protestants of "*forbidding to marry*," because it is allowed among the common people, and not only so, but marriage is included among the "*seven sacraments*." The Protestants on the other hand have sarcastically called it "*A bastard sacrament*," and yet they contend that it is a *Divine Institution*. Agreeably to this view, they frequently speak of "*solemnizing marriages*." But with all their efforts to prove it a "*holy command*," an "*ordinance of heaven*," with all their holy prayers to sanctify it, and the work connected with it, they are unwilling to set an example, by having their work exposed to open day. "God is light, and with him is no darkness at all." Those who walk in the light of God, are willing that all their works should be made manifest. I once had a very different view of this subject; but the light of this testimony has caused the scales to fall from my eyes, and I can now see what my condition then was, and can but feel grateful to the *Divine Being* for the call that I have received, to be separate from the world, and to come into that heavenly order, where "old things are passed away and all things are become new."

As to the professed ministers of the gospel, of every denomination, whilst they live according to the course of this world, instead of "following the Lamb whithersoever he goeth," they are all alike to me. They may preach with the pathos of Gabriel,—though the earth should

tremble with the thunder of their eloquence, the simple testimony of one who takes up his cross by living a life of self-denial, outweighs the whole. Consider, ye high minded, that it is not a light thing to stand forth as heralds of gospel truth—I have no patience to witness the mock worship of those who prostrate themselves before the shrine of *Venus*, and lift their polluted hands toward heaven, in the attitude of solemn devotion! Let not such pretend to preach the gospel. No wonder that the giddy multitude feel very comfortable whilst wallowing in their filth, when they *know* that their ministers are in the same condition. It accords with the fashionable religion of the day. It is by no means disreputable. The Judges, the Doctors, the Lawyers and the Preachers leading the whole. These profess to be the meek followers of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! What a burlesque upon Christianity is this! Fine meeting-houses, tall steeples, splendid carriages, fashionable dresses, balls, assemblies, theatres, prayer-meetings, monthly concerts, social worship, all jumbled up together; first partaking at the Lord's table, then at the devil's, alternately! My soul sickens at the sight! In the day, they are swallowed up in all the blandishments of the world, and at night reposing upon the lap of *Delilah*! Why all this inconsistency? The answer is ready. Both ministers and people are totally ignorant as to the scriptural meaning of flesh and spirit. "Those who are in the flesh cannot please God." All their conduct, and indeed all their religion, partake of the fountain from whence they originate.

B. This is taking a bold stand. You appear to look upon all professors who have not taken up a full cross against fleshly indulgence, as being blinded by "the god of this world."

M. There are but two ways mentioned in the scriptures, the broad and the narrow way. The latter is the way of self-denial and the cross. Those who are in the broad way, are carnally minded, which is death; those who are in the narrow way, are spiritually minded, which is life and peace. Life and death are the necessary consequences of the state of our minds, and are inseparably connected with it. The way of truth is sufficiently clear; "but men have chosen darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Let it be our object to "walk in the light as he is in the light," and may we never reject the council of God against ourselves, lest "a promise being left of entering into rest, we should seem to come short of it." "For blessed are they that know the joyful sound of the gospel, and live in obedience to it," they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance."

B. It appears by the light you have thrown upon this subject, almost impossible, for those who live in the filthy indulgences of the flesh, to be fit temples for the Holy Spirit; yet can you say that the ministers of the different denominations, who do not take up a *full* cross, have effected no good by all their efforts and exertions?

M. This is a subject that requires attention. It is very plain that no preacher can help a people out of that in which he is lost himself; especially if he hold it in estimation by faith, and delight in it by practice, "for while they promise them liberty, they themselves are servants to corruption." I admit that the unprecedented exertions of anti-christ to overthrow the vital principles of Christianity, and his assuming that name, has served to perpetuate the faith, that there is a true Christ. For there can be nothing counterfeited unless there is a genuine; and the

greater the exertion to counterfeit, the greater the confirmation of a true. Therefore they, as well as modern professors of Christianity, had "the form of godliness, but denied the power;" nor will I dispute but many have received that degree of light and power by which they were enabled to convict their hearers of such sins as are below the common degrees of morality. This is manifestly the height of their attainment in themselves and their churches, if you will consider that they have not attained to any thing more than good morality. For "by their fruits are they known." So far as preachers and people have inculcated the principles of common honesty and good morality, so far are their works approved. Christianity and morality are *not* one and the same thing. A person may be truly moral and not Christian, (and I very much doubt whether all such, are not nearer the kingdom than many very high sounding professors of Christianity); but there is no such thing as being a Christian without being moral. I do not deny but that some have been inspired to prepare the way for the ushering in of the true work of the gospel; as was the case of John the Baptist. He was sent to "prepare the way of the Lord, and make ready a people to receive him when he should appear;" and this he did, by preaching conviction and repentance, not pretending he had salvation for them. Wherever the true light is about to break forth, this preparatory work will appear; and if those who are possessed of this preparatory spirit, close in with the true light, when it is made manifest, in lieu of setting up their doctrines as a guide to heaven, as is too generally the case with modern professors; they too, may find salvation and eternal life.

DIALOGUE VII.

B. There are some weighty objections besides the ones which I have mentioned, that I wish to present to you for your consideration. It appears, according to the scriptures, that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were good men. The first obtained the honorable appellation of "*the Father of the faithful*." They not only had families of children, but considered it an honor. They esteemed their children a blessing. If we credit the divine testimony, at that ancient period, it was looked upon as a great affliction, a severe judgment not to have children. Righteous Noah and Lot, both had families. David, who "*was a man after God's own heart*," had a family; and so had good old Job, who lived long before David. And we are expressly informed that Solomon had several hundred wives and concubines. In the New Testament, we read of "*Peter's wife's mother*." Of course, Peter must have had a wife. These, it is believed, were all righteous men. If I am in an error in this respect you perceive that I am in good company. If your testimony condemns me, it also condemns them. I should like to hear what you have to say to this.

M. I acknowledge you have stated your objections fairly. It shall

be my object to meet them so. There is no reasonable doubt but those whom the world call good men, conformed to the order of the world at the times to which you refer; at least, so far as to be instrumental in generating their species. But are we to infer from this, that Christians, who profess to live lives according to the purity of the gospel, should look up to them as examples in this case? We are not commanded to follow *Noah, Lot, David or Solomon*; but we are called upon to follow *Christ*.

To give you a satisfactory answer, I am aware it will be necessary to enter into a broad field. And, as I said before, I wish you to yield only to the most convincing proof.

Under the Mosaic dispensation, sexual intercourse was allowed, but under severe restrictions. Should these restrictions be imposed on the present anti-christian ministry, they would view it almost as *bad as "total abstinence."* To be circumscribed in the means of libidinous indulgence, would in their estimation, render life dull and insipid! Was it designed of heaven, that the highest passion of the brute should be upon a level with the highest passion of man! And yet to be confined to times and seasons, though it answers the demands of nature with the brutal creation, is too great a restriction with those who zealously plead for the "*first great command.*" They are in a tremor lest the earth should be depopulated, when at the same time artificial means are resorted to, to prevent issue; though particular care is taken not to lose the very *Summum Bonum* of sensual gratification!!

The figurative import of circumcision, under the law, is a conclusive evidence of the nature of the cross under the gospel. Circumcision was an abiding institution, given to Abraham and his posterity, by which they were distinguished from all other people. It was a painful operation, and a source of mortification. The separation of the foreskin of the flesh, prefigured that cross which should destroy the life of fleshly lust. That this is its true typical signification, is evident from Rom. ii. 28, 29. "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men but of God.

Some contend that circumcision was figurative of baptism, and that baptism, under the gospel, took the place of circumcision under the law. But this is too ridiculous to merit a candid refutation. A figure always bears some resemblance to the substance represented. But what resemblance is there between baptism and circumcision?

I once saw a controversy between a pedo-baptist and an anti-pedo-baptist. The one strenuously contended, that circumcision prefigured infant baptism; the other was equally positive, that it typified baptism by immersion, and applied it to adults only! They were both "men in the smoke." They exhibited a considerable show of learning, together with a large share of folly, rancor and abuse.

Baptism itself was but a figure; that is, water baptism. The substance is the baptism of the Holy Ghost. If circumcision prefigured water baptism, it must be the figure of a figure. A greater absurdity cannot easily be imagined. Is it not strange that these Reverend D. D.'s, with all their theological knowledge, could not discover the striking similitude between circumcision and the cross of primitive Christians, who separated themselves from the world, by *crucifying the flesh with its affec-*

tions and lusts ; or did they wilfully shut their eyes to a truth, so clearly and so forcibly revealed in the New Testament of our Saviour ! How much time has been wasted in fruitless controversies ! How many ponderous productions have issued from the press, that should serve as mere waste paper, when the fountain of truth is accessible to the capacity of children !

There are many who look upon water baptism as a door of entrance into the church, and view it as the substance of the "*Cross of Christ* !" But how can circumcision prefigure either immersion or sprinkling ? It must be evident to the smallest capacity, that there is not the shadow of resemblance between them. It is impossible to conceive of a more appropriate figure to represent the cutting off, or rejection of the works of the flesh under the gospel.

B. This may be true ; but it applies to the male, only. It has no reference to the female. The figure is not perfect.

M. Though circumcision was, exclusively, applied to the male ; yet this by no means, lessens the force of the figure. Those who imagine baptism to be the anti-type, would labor under a similar disadvantage in their application of the typical import of circumcision. I do not recollect to have seen this objection in any publication, and I have read most of the controversies between the Orthodox Congregationalists and Calvinistic Baptists, upon this subject. But when the true import of circumcision is presented to the human mind, the most trivial objections will be started, however irrelevant they may be to the subject under discussion. The reason is obvious. As long as there is the shadow of a pretext for the indulgence of lustful passions, depraved man will not yield to the most convincing evidence. In relation to natural life, it is an old proverb, that "*a drowning man will catch at a straw.*" To save the life of the flesh, the most flimsy objections will be urged with as much zeal and apparent confidence, as if salvation, both for time and eternity, depended on the unrestrained license given by a corrupt priesthood, to the animal passions.

I do not mention these things because your objection is of a feather's weight. The truth is, another legal ceremony with respect to the female, more than balances that of circumcision, as it relates to the male. A woman who brought forth a male child, was excluded from the sanctuary, for forty days from the birth of the child. When the child was a female, the time of her exclusion from the sanctuary, was doubled. See Lev. chap. xii. The woman was also required to bring a *sin-offering* to the door of the tabernacle, and there offer it as an atonement before she could be admitted into the sanctuary. Both circumcision, applicable to the male, and these legal ceremonies pertaining to the female, were intended to prefigure that state of purity which should characterize those who were to stand upon Mount Zion, without fault before God. The law required certain ceremonies to be performed, applicable to both male and female, pursuant to sexual coition, which demonstrate the impurity and sinfulness of the act. Where a sin-offering was required, it would be absurd to say there was no sin. You are requested to read the 15th chapter of Leviticus, and the 19th chapter of Exodus, where you will find this truth clearly exhibited. The works of the flesh were excluded from the Jewish sanctuary, which was but a type of the gospel sanctuary. Can any be so blinded as to suppose that

what was considered impure under the law, and required an *offering* as an atonement, is sanctioned under the gospel, as pure and holy.

B. As I observed before, the *apostle Peter* had a wife, and we have no reason to suppose but what many of the rest had. St. Paul rather encouraged the "younger women to *marry, bear children, and guide the house.*"

M. The apostles travailed with Christ in the *regeneration*, and had the promise of sitting on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Their having wives, is no evidence that they lived with them, as such. This is implied, if not demonstrated, by the words of Christ in answer to the question, "*What shall we have who have left all?*" "There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife and children, or lands for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive a hundred fold now in this time, houses and brethren, and sisters and mothers, and children and lands, with *persecutions*; and in the world to come, eternal life." You will particularly observe, that *persecutions* are placed instead of father and wife. It is expressly said, that the wife is left; but no mention is made that she shall be restored. The truth is, in the gospel kingdom, the wife becomes a sister; and there is no other intercourse allowed, but such as is usual in such a relation.

The advice given by the apostle to the younger women, to marry, was not because it was commendable in a church relation, but "to give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. For some are *already* turned aside after Satan." They had professed to live a life of continency, but had turned aside and brought a reproach on the very profession they had made. It was better for such to marry according to the common course of the world, to bear children, and to guide the house, so that their profession might be according to their practice, than to give such occasions to the adversaries of Christ's gospel, to speak reproachfully.

Neither Christ nor his apostles forbade to marry. There is no compulsion in the gospel. It was a matter of free choice with Paul, to follow the example of Christ; he, therefore, did not "live after the flesh," but crucified it in imitation of his Divine Master. It appears that the church at Corinth wrote to Paul, on the subject of marriage, which elicited from him a very lengthy reply. It is the burthen of the third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh chapters. The view he gives of the Corinthian church, is very different from that given of the church at Jerusalem. He wrote to the Corinthians, as to a "*carnal*" people. They had just been converted from Paganism, and polygamy, generally, prevailed among them. Their eyes were but partially opened, and it was a work of time before they could be restrained in all their heathenish practices. The first step taken, was to convince them of the propriety of being contented with one wife. This was as great a progress as could be expected in the commencement of their Christian career. Paul fed them with such instruction as they were capable of receiving. They were not able to bear meat; therefore, he fed them with milk. Without keeping this in mind, it is impossible to connect the 7th chapter of 1st Cor. so as to appear consistent with itself. In one place he is plain and pointed in favor of Christian celibacy. In another, "*he indulges them with permissions.*" In the 1st verse, he says, "It is good for a man

not to touch a woman." (*Greek,—gunaikost, a wife.*) "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and every woman, her own husband." The first verse is pointed in relation to Paul's sentiments; the second, is a permission to the weak in faith, to avoid fornication. In another place, he says with emphasis, "*I would that all men were even as I myself;*"—But all had not this measure of faith—"I say, therefore, to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them to abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: *for it is better to marry than to burn.*"

The opposers of the cross of Christ, I leave to contend with Paul. What would have become of the world, say they, had "*all men*" been like Paul? "In a little more than a century, the earth would have been depopulated." Had Paul been as shrewd in calculation as they, he would hardly have written so inconsiderate a sentence. The wise ones of the present day, have an excellent faculty of pampering up "*the old man,*" and perpetuating "*his deeds.*" They think they have a very specious proof for the works of the flesh, in the above cited passage. "*It is better to marry than to burn.*" I have no doubt of your good sense; and I have had too many evidences of your candor, to suppose, for a moment, that you are not convinced of the folly of such objections, though urged by those who appear under the dissembled garb of Christianity.

Paul well knew the treacherous habits of many who had partially adopted the Christian faith; and all will acknowledge it was better for such to be contented with one wife, or husband, than keep up a promiscuous intercourse with many.

In relation to the married, Paul gave the following counsel:—"Let not the wife depart from her husband. But, and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband; and let not the husband put away his wife."—"If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to live with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing husband; else were your children unclean—but now are they holy. But, if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases; but God hath called us to peace." We perceive by this, the meaning of Christ when he said, "For from henceforth, there shall be five in one house divided,—three against two, and two against three. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household."

This division necessarily followed the pure testimony of the gospel. That pretended gospel which blends flesh and spirit together, is followed by no such consequences as these. Notwithstanding the diversity of religious opinions in the Christian world, they can get along very amicably, so long as they cordially unite in bowing before the altar of Venus.

Some have supposed, because Christ said, "I came not to send peace on earth, but rather a division;" and again, "My peace give I unto you," they have discovered a paradox. It is not so, in reality. The message of Christ was a message of love and peace. The division, of which it was the remote cause, arose from its effects on different minds. Whilst some cordially embraced the humiliating doctrines of the cross,

others exhibited the most determined opposition. The effects, or fruits of the cross, are uniformly the same ; but the tempers as well as circumstances in which persons are placed, are diversified. The evidence of truth is the same ; but what is evidence to one, is not to another. The one, enjoys the blessings of peace ; whilst the other, is goaded by the most deep-rooted enmity. This is the *division* to which Christ alluded, and is found to be the result of the preaching of the cross, in the present day of increased light and glory.

Concerning virgins, Paul says, " I suppose, therefore, that this is good for the *present distress*. *Art thou bound unto a wife ? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife ? seek not a wife.*"

B. Dr. Clarke says, that the "*present distress*," had allusion to persecution ; and for this reason, Paul not only lived a single life himself, but advised others to do the same.

M. I have read the ill-natured comments of Clarke, upon this chapter, long before I embraced this testimony, but did not know, at the time, why he should lose the equanimity of his temper. But since that time, I have ascertained that a number of the preachers of the Methodist communion, lived lives of conscientious celibacy, from the evidence which this chapter presents, of its being the life of the apostles and primitive christians. No doubt the Doctor did not wish to be disturbed in the free indulgence of his gross propensities. He, therefore, ransacked the field of human invention, to ward off so tremendous a blow at the very root of carnal pleasure. In this, he evinced some ingenuity ; but the smallest capacity may discover the fallacy of such reasoning.

Had the primitive Christians unreservedly conformed to the world, in this respect, it would have been a direct way of saving them from persecution. There must have been a veil over Clarke's eyes, as thick as a side of sole leather, or he would have seen the impropriety of such an inference. He mistook "*fornication*," for "*persecution*." But this is but a small mistake for a D. D. to make.

In verse 28, Paul said, " But if thou marry, thou hast not sinned ; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned." No doubt this statement was in answer to a question they had put to him in relation to this subject. But why should they propose a question to him of this description ? Why did they ask him, whether such sinned or not, in marrying ? Would such questions be likely to be proposed, in the present day, to the orthodox clergy ? Certainly not. If the clergy themselves followed the examples of Christ and the apostles, in living lives of self-denial, such questions would naturally be agitated.

Paul's answer was dictated by wisdom and sound policy, and was the only one that could have been given in the condition they were in. But I wish you to mark what follows, verse 29. "*But this I say, brethren, The time is short. It remaineth, that both they that have wives, be as though they had none ; and they that weep, as though they wept not ; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not ; and they that buy, as though they possessed not ; and they that use this world, as not abusing it. For the fashion of this world passeth away.*"

B. If this was to have been fulfilled in this life, there is an end to the argument. But it is the general impression, that Paul had reference to a future state in the invisible world. If this were not the case, I have no more to say. Your views rest on the foundation of immutable truth.

M. That this was to have been accomplished in the present state of being, is evident from the very mode of expression of the apostle. They that *buy*, were to be as those that *possessed* not; and they that use *this world*, as not *abusing it*. Can it be said, with any propriety, that immortal spirits *buy* and *sell*? Or that in a future state, they either *use* or *abuse* the good things of this life?

In another division of this subject, the apostle's language has been grossly perverted. Verses 36, 37 and 38. "But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, and she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not; let them marry. Nevertheless, he that standeth steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart, that he will keep his virgin, doeth well; so, then, he that giveth her in marriage, doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage, doeth better."

That which here applies to the Father, or Guardian of the virgin, has been applied to the *libertine* and *seducer*, and fornication has been established by apostolic authority as no sin! The words "let them marry," and the latter clause of the above quotation, "He that giveth *her* in marriage doeth well, but he that giveth *her* not in marriage doeth better," to my apprehension, clears the apostle from an aspersion, that otherwise would have been too justly palmed upon him. Before I received the testimony in which I now rejoice, the 7th chapter of the 1 Cor. was a senseless jargon. But now it is as clear as light. I have studied the utmost simplicity and brevity in presenting before you my views upon this weighty subject. I am willing that they should be tested by any fair rule of criticism. As you are a Greek scholar, you need not be informed that a translation might have been given much more favorable to the ideas I have laid before you, and more consistent with the original text. Some people of pretended refinement consider this an indelicate subject, upon which they are so *exceeding* sensitive, that their *modesty* will hardly suffer them to give it a dispassionate examination. It is a pity that their refinement and delicacy should not lead them at least to refrain from *acts* of which "it is even a *shame* to speak!" The inspired Prophets of the Old Testament, and the apostles of the New, were by no means mealy-mouthed in exposing the corruptions of mankind. Innocence generally takes no offence. The sensualist usually takes the alarm and becomes exceedingly indignant. Such characters remind me of the female, who, on beholding her distorted features in a mirror, vented her spite on the glass, by dashing it to atoms! But this rashness did not change her deformity, though it clearly demonstrated her folly. Jesus Christ, in answer to the Sadducees, who were ignorant that he was "the resurrection," declared, "The children of this world marry and are given in marriage; but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage."

It appears by the question proposed by them, that they had the impression that Christ held to a literal resurrection. But Christ, aware of their design, presented an answer, pointed in reproof, and repleat with instruction. He declared that God was not a God of the dead, but of the living. He told them that they greatly erred, "not knowing the scriptures nor the *power of God*."

The doctrine of the resurrection does not properly belong here, only as it is necessary to illustrate the subject under consideration. Marriage, according to the passage above quoted, belongs to "*the children of this world*," but not to the children of the resurrection. The only question to be decided here is, What is meant by the expression, "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead?" According to the common received opinion, *worthiness* has nothing to do in reference to the resurrection. All are to be raised from the dead without distinction. But the resurrection spoken of here, is applicable to the *worthy* only. You are too well acquainted with the Greek, not to know that the word from which "world" is translated, does not refer to the invisible world, but to the glory of that *age* which was then to come. This removes all ambiguity from the passage. Those who were to partake of the blessings of the "*new creation*," should neither marry nor be given in marriage. A division line was then to be drawn between the children of this world and the children of the resurrection.

Should it be argued, that this view of the subject is contradicted by the phrase, "Neither shall they die any more," I answer, the Saviour expressly declared that those who believed on him should "*never die*." Neither in the one case or the other, was there any reference to temporal death. Spiritual death is the wages of sin; but the happy participants in the resurrection are saved from sin, and consequently can never experience the agonies of that death, which is inseparably connected with transgression.

I look upon the scripture which leads these remarks, as a direct and positive evidence, that the church, in the latter day, should be constituted of virgin characters.

The Pharisees came to Jesus with this question: "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" As it was their nefarious design to embarrass Christ, he wisely foiled them in every attempt of this description. Why was this question put to him? No doubt there were some circumstances attendant on his ministry, which gave rise to this query. It had a tendency, perhaps, according to the view of the world, to "*separate man and wife*." Jesus said unto them, "Have ye not read, that he which made them *at the beginning*, made them male and female; and said, for this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and cleave unto his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh? *What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder*. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement and to put her away?" Jesus referred to what was said in the *beginning*, but they supposed he had reference to the Jewish history. The doctrine of Christ did not tend to separate "what God had joined together." Jesus saith unto them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives, but from the beginning it was not so." Christ well knew the cause of putting away their wives and marrying others, and his answer contains a mild but forcible reproof. Some of the disciples understood him and said, "If the case of the man be so with his wife, *it is not good to marry*." Jesus gave this declaration an approval, in the following words, "All men cannot receive this saying (*it is not good to marry*) save they to whom it is given. "For there are some eunuchs which were so born from their mother's womb, and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men; and

there be eunuchs which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake." "*He that is able to receive it let him receive it.*" Jesus Christ and those who followed him in the regeneration, were those who *made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake*. But few were able to receive this saying. Jesus resorted to no compulsive measures, but left his followers to the freedom of choice. Both by precept and example, he inculcated the necessity of a virgin life. The formal Christian may spurn at the idea. They may deride those who are constrained by the force of all-conquering truth to imitate Christ in living a pure life of self-denial, "nevertheless the foundation of Christ standeth sure. The Lord knoweth them that are his."

Every new examination produces additional strength. No one can reasonably doubt the correctness of the conclusion at which we have arrived, that a full and perfect cross against the lust of the flesh is absolutely required of all those who make the least pretensions of being the real followers of Christ.

B. You have anticipated most of the objections which arose in my mind as you passed along. You have thrown light on the several scripture passages which have come under examination. I cannot say that at the commencement of this discussion, I was not, in some measure, prepossessed against your testimony. These prejudices are entirely removed. There is a strange collision in my feelings. My judgment appears to be convinced, that you are correct in your theory; but still there is a train of objections that present themselves, which must be obviated, before I can adopt your sentiments *in full*.

M. I well know the cause of your conflicting feelings. Why should I not? I was once placed in a similar situation, and although I thought I had reasonable objections, yet more mature reflection convinced me that they were more *weighty* than reasonable. These *weighty* objections I found must be set aside; as reason convinced me that I never could enter the celestial city with them, nor they with me!

In the 8th chapter of Romans, the subject of the cross is exhibited with such clearness, that none need misunderstand it. We are there told what characters we must sustain, in order to be adopted into the family of Christ.

B. But does not Paul say, in the 7th chap. of Romans, "When I would do good, evil is present with me?" And does he not say, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" and finally sums up the matter, that "with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin?" And is not this emphatically serving two masters?

M. To a person of your discernment, candor and consideration, this subject, I apprehend, will be easily illustrated. Originally the epistle of Paul to the Romans was not divided into chapters, but taken up in different subjects. In the two first chapters, he shows more particularly the state of the Pagan or Gentile world; and in the second and third chapters, he shows that the Jews are no better by nature than the Gentiles. In the fourth, fifth, and sixth chapters, he shows that salvation was not attained until it was received through faith in obedience to Christ, and not by any righteous works they had to boast of for salvation. In the seventh chapter, the subject of your last questions are embodied. Here Paul takes up the situation and standing of one under the law, beginning,

"Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?" &c. Thus he continues to the 14th verse, where he changes from past to present tense, using the personal pronoun *I*—assumes and personates a character, upon whom the law exercises its influence—convicting him of sin, but showing no way of salvation; and in this dilemma, he cries out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" Here it is evident, he had a mind to serve God; yet without the means, being still under the law. But O, how vastly different is Paul's situation, when he represents himself under the law of Christ, after he is born of the Spirit! Hear him in the eighth chapter of Romans—"There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, has made me free from the law of sin and death. From this, it appears he felt himself in a state of justification, notwithstanding the pathetic exclamation, "*Who shall deliver me from the body of this death!*"—"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh; and for sin condemned sin in the flesh—That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Sin was never condemned in the flesh, till Christ did it, and the righteousness of the law was never fulfilled till it was done by those "who walked not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." He does not say that those who walk after the flesh *and* after the spirit, fulfill the righteousness of the law. There is no such thing as blending the flesh and Spirit together. The requirement is both negative and positive. To cleave to the one, we must necessarily forsake the other. The following verse assigns a reason for this, "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit." "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Finally, Paul comes to this conclusion, "That they that are in the flesh (or are under its government) cannot please God. Therefore brethren, said he, we are debtors, not to the flesh to live after the flesh—For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Rom. 8th chapter.

This is a lengthy quotation; but it is so connected, that it is proper it should be presented before you at full length. It embraces the substance of the cross of Christ, and it is so plain that it renders comment almost unnecessary. Is it strange, that the person who wrote this, lived a life of chastity from principle? Are you surprised that there are so many embodied in the "*United Society*" of a similar faith? You may have indulged the impression that this is a body of enthusiasts, whose blind devotion to a fanatical female, has led them to make a surrender of their reason and liberty; but when once the full blaze of truth opens to your mind, it will dissipate this mist, and you will see an order of people not inferior in native genius, many of whom possess the most extensive acquirements in arts and sciences; but these are of but small importance, when compared with that inestimable moral worth, by which they are distinguished, without which no social body can reasonably expect to prosper.

I have laid before you some of the evidences which produced conviction on my mind, and resulted in the unshaken belief, that this is the or-

der and people predicted of by the ancient Prophets. Under this impression, where is the person, however noted he may be for abilities, natural and acquired, who would not consider it an honor more than can be conferred by prince or potentate, to occupy a *humble* station in this *spiritual Jerusalem*, or *City of the living God*? These remarks of commendation do not flow from motives of vanity. Such are the prejudices prevalent among the various denominations of professed christians, with respect to this order, that they are hardly reckoned christians in the journals of the day, which purport to give an account of the different communions which divide Christendom! Others are fond of blazoning to the public, their great numbers and yearly accessions, whilst this order make no ostentatious parade of either. Pure Christianity always presents an unassuming aspect. True merit is of a retired nature; whilst that which is counterfeit or spurious, is known by a pompous display of what it in reality does not possess.

A multitude of proofs equally forcible with those we have presented, may be gathered from the scriptures, which are calculated to confirm the candid, in the truth of this testimony. To the Galatians, Paul testified, that "the flesh lusted against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and that these were contrary the one to the other." The truth of this is confirmed by the experience of every person that is not "*twice dead, and plucked up by the roots*." That the lust of the flesh is the "*man of sin*," mentioned by the apostle, is evident from what he says in Gal. chap. 5th: 19—21. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings," &c. What a catalogue is here exhibited! These are a direct counterpart to the fruits of the Spirit, which are "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such, there is no law." "*And they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts*." St. Paul could say, "Be ye followers of me, even as I am also of Christ." Again he said, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." The elements of the world are, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." To these, Paul was crucified, that is, he was *dead* to them, and they were *dead* to him. If this is not his meaning, it is not in the power of language to convey it. I challenge the profoundest scholar to frame a sentence better calculated to sustain the truth of this testimony. Many *talk* of crucifying "*the old man with his deeds*," when in fact their first object is, to *nurse him up*. A few of his deeds they can without much inconvenience, dispense with. These they are willing to crucify; but the rest, by all means, must be retained! It is required of us to be dead, not only to *actual sin*, but the *nature* of it. This testimony strikes at the root of the tree. This is the way, and the only way of salvation. People may talk of salvation as much as they please; to this test they must sooner or later come, in order to experience *salvation* by Christ. But few preachers can have the presumption to say, "*Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ*." The truth is, but few follow Christ, by living the life that he did. There is a wide difference between *professing* to follow Christ, and following him in *reality*. Whilst professed ministers are up to their necks in filth, they would act more consistently, to exhort their fellow creatures to do as they

say, but by no means to imitate their examples. You may consider this harsh; but the time has arrived, when *plain dealing* should be our motto. The truth requires no apology. And my calculation is, to *how close to the line*, even at the hazard of giving offence to many, whose friendship I do not covet, and whose enmity I have no reason to fear.

Before we close this interview, I wish to make an extract from Rev. chap. 14th: 1—5 verses. "And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Zion, and with him, a hundred, forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder; and I heard the voice of harpers, harping with their harps; and they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders; and no man could learn that song, but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. *These are they which were not defiled with women, for they are virgins.* These are they which *follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.* These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God."

It is impossible for you not to perceive that this extract contains certain characteristics, which exclusively apply to those who compose the United Society. Many can have no conception but that "*Mount Zion*" is a *place* in the invisible world; and consequently they meet with no difficulty in applying the vision to a state beyond the regions of mortality. As it is said, the "hundred and forty and four thousand were redeemed from the earth," and were "without fault before the throne of God;" it is supposed these circumstances confirm such a sentiment.

The word *earth* does not, as some suppose, refer to this terraqueous globe, but to the earthy nature which consists altogether in sensuality. Believers among the Gentiles, were said to be "*redeemed from their vain conversation,*" and from that nature which gave rise to it. Again, "In whom we have *redemption* through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." The children of Israel were said to be "*redeemed from the hand of Pharaoh, and from the darkness of Egypt.*" All these passages, and many others that might be quoted, show that redemption is experienced in this life. St. Paul said that believers had come to "*Mount Zion, the city of the living God.*" St. John saw Mount Zion coming down from God out of heaven, and immediately affirmed that "the tabernacle of God was with men."

Natural men suppose the "throne of God" to be an elevated seat somewhere above the stars. *Throne*, is a figurative expression, and is used in scripture to signify comparative degrees of moral purity. In this sense, God sits upon a throne, elevated above all others. Christ "sits upon the throne of his glory." Those who followed Christ in the regeneration, should "sit upon thrones." Those who stood upon the Mount Zion, were elevated above earthy elements, and "followed the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." They were the first fruits unto God and the Lamb. In them we discover a specimen of the after-harvest. They were not defiled with women, and were consequently virgin characters. They sang a song that no man could learn, but such as were distinguished by the above characteristic virtues. *One hundred and forty and four thousand* are the specific number mentioned; but we should not infer from this, that these are the only ones who will obtain this victory. It is

a prophetic manner of expression, and clearly demonstrates the truth of what I have endeavored to substantiate ; that there were those in the apostolic age, who, from conscience, lived a virgin life, in imitation of the blessed Saviour. It is said, in the 7th chap. of Rev. that this hundred and forty-four thousand, were before the throne of God, and served him *day and night* in his holy temple. That could not be in the invisible world, for *day and night* are not reckoned there. It is further said of them, that they should reign *on the earth*.

Whether you credit it or not, I now state to you the truth in sincerity. The fulfilment of this sublime vision may be seen in the order of the *United Society*. If there were no other proof within the lids of the Bible, the vision which we have examined, is altogether sufficient to satisfy my mind, that this Church owes its origin to divine *Power* and *Wisdom*. Where, under the broad canopy of heaven, can you find another order, to which it will apply ? There is both internal and external evidence of this. Examine every part of the vision, and you will perceive that, *that* which was applicable to the *primitive church*, is equally conspicuous in the *Millennial Church* of the latter day. How many are ardently desiring for Christ to come and reign on the earth ! How many are fondly anticipating a glorious period to come ! O that some ministering angel would whisper in their ears, "*The time has already come, the period has arrived, and Christ has begun to set up an everlasting kingdom of righteousness, love and peace.*"

B. From what has been said already, I perceive you are confirmed in the belief, that you are connected with the only true church ; and that the New Jerusalem, or the new heavens, or the new earth, are created, and are now located and established on this terrestrial ball. I presume further, from what has been said and admitted, that you will not deny that the Almighty, according to present appearances, to say the least, is dependent upon the children of men, or as you might term it, upon the world, for subjects to compose and build up this New Jerusalem, this incorruptible church. The whole train of your remarks thus far, has been, not only against all illegal intercourse, but against those who may live in strict conformity to the marriage contract, and whose only avowed object may be to propagate their species, which, if I should admit, then of course, those who live in this order, cannot please God.

Now I presume you will not deny, that if Christ came to condemn and bring an end to this order, then, of course, all should follow him ; and, as every rational soul is endowed with volition, all *might* have followed Christ. If all, in that day, had forsaken the world, as you term it, then the mystery of God would have been finished. But, if you say that the work of regeneration could not be then matured, as Christ had not made his second appearing, yet I do not see how you will reconcile these things. You will not deny, that the hundred, forty and four thousand, were begotten after the order of the first Adam, as well as every one now of your order. Of course, it follows that the order of the first Adam was, and now is, necessary, that the order of the second, may be completed. It appears obvious, therefore, even according to *your* reasoning, that the New Jerusalem is built, to say the least, of materials furnished by the old creation. How, then, can the order of the first Adam be condemned, if properly organized and conducted, when it is so plain, that it must have been preserved, at least to this day, that the de-

signs of God to man thus far, might be perpetuated on earth? Should all now close in with your views, in a few years, the *Church of Christ* must be *extinct* on the earth, and the saints, even in Heaven, must be limited.

M. I am pleased to have you so free in raising all 'real, or imaginary objections.

It is evident that the Creator always works according to his own designs. Hence we may conclude, that it was his design that the first Adam should multiply in the order of the earthly creation, and people the earth in obedience to the law of his Creator; and had Adam and all his posterity kept his Divine law, and of course, their rectitude, they would have subserved the purpose of God, in their creation; but this was not the case. Man rebelled against God and his law; then he lost his union to God, and his right hand of heirship to heavenly blessing; and, notwithstanding man's rebellion, God did not leave him in that dilemma, without hope. He gave him the promise of a Saviour, who would save him from the power of the serpent to which he had yielded obedience. God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh is come before me;" yet he did not disannul the promise he had before made, but suffered them to go on and multiply, to subserve the purpose of the *New Creation*. Some suppose that God was diverted from his purpose of making an end of all flesh, because "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." It was only to subserve the plan of the *New Creation*. An end was determined. The decree went forth, "My spirit shall not always strive with man," although it was four thousand years before the promised Saviour appeared, yet the first promise was not disannulled; and should it be two thousand years from his appearing to the end of all flesh, the decree is no less certain. It would be proper to observe, that God promised a Saviour at the time of the fall, and in the fulness of time, he appeared; but had God put a stop to multiplying at the time of the flood, there would have been no sinners to save. So, also, after Christ appeared, he promised he would come again; but had he put a period to generation, in his first appearing, it would be useless for him to appear on the earth again.

No doubt God comprehended his whole work from the beginning, and designed his plans accordingly, so that each part should be fulfilled in its own time and season, as is evident from the different requirements of the different dispensations; and as you say man was, and is, endued with the power of volition, therefore, man was not prohibited from sinning, if he chose. All the transgressions of man from the fall of Adam to the present day, did not, nor cannot, alter the purpose of God, but only affect himself, and he will be rewarded accordingly. As it was the purpose of God to make an end of the old creation, and establish a new in its proper time and season, and as every thing effected has a beginning and an end, so it required an adequate length of time to complete this purpose, both in relation to the old and the new creation. The new creation is formed out of the old, by regeneration, and if there never had been an old creation, by generation, there never could have been a new creation by regeneration; nor could there be a new creation, unless it was radically and materially different from the old. As the new creation was to be made, or formed by the process of regeneration, it was necessary that they should exist coeval with each other. So that when the new creation commenced, it began among the subjects of the old. Of

such materials the church of Christ may be said to be composed. As there must be a beginning to the old creation, and as it must be matured before it could have an end, so also must the new have a birth, and be matured before the work of Christ can be completed. Hence it is plain that there will be two kinds of people, or two orders on the earth at one and the same time, till the consummation of the design of God, and the finishing of the work of Christ.

It is the general opinion of all professors in Christendom, that the world will come to an end at some future period. The first, or old creation, must exist on the earth until the close of Christ's work, until every soul has had a full and free offer of salvation and eternal life, which is, and will be left to their volition, whether to accept or refuse; and when the work of Christ is completed on the earth, no doubt the design of God will be accomplished in all respects, as to how, when, and how many, will become, or make themselves the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem. Then the mystery of God will be finished. The church of Christ will never be extinct on the earth, so long as there is one soul of the old creation, who has not had an offer of the gospel. When that is effected, the work of Christ with man, will be completed.

When the work of Christ, or the new creation, commenced, it was offered to man as a privilege, and not as compulsion, and has so continued, and will so continue, to the end; and whoever has received, or may hereafter receive or reject it, do it upon the estimation they put upon each. The way of life and the way of death will yet be offered to every soul. When the gospel is offered, there are two objects placed before man. Then is the time for him to elect his alternative, whether to become a worker with Christ in the new creation, whose work was to destroy sin and him that had the power of it, or to be a worker with the first Adam, all of whose followers propagate sin, for no one can beget an offspring unless they beget it in, and with the propensities of the fall; so then it is evident they are workers against Christ, whose work is to destroy the works brought in by the fall, while they are propagating a generation who always were, and always will be, by nature fallen, sinful creatures.

Condemnation does not rest upon those who live after the order of natural generation, until they have the offer and privilege of leaving the old, and embracing the new; or at least until they are so far enlightened as to believe that *word* in part, which Christ said should judge every man at the last day. What right can any one claim to the new creation, or even to the name of Christian, so long as he is propagating and increasing that which is against Christ, even if it is done under a pretext of furnishing Christ (or the Almighty,) with sinners or subjects for him to save.

O ye sons and daughters of despondency, come to the river of life; come to the fountain of living waters, that you may receive "*the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of peace.*"

B. I am constrained to acknowledge that your arguments are reasonable, and you have illustrated the foregoing subject so clearly, and to my satisfaction, that I do not incline to discuss this part of our topic any farther.

DIALOGUE VIII.

B. You say that every part of this vision is applicable to those who compose the *United Society*. Your arguments are conclusive; yet I must be better acquainted with the characters that make up that Society, before I can speak with such assurance. But still, from what I do know, there is no body of people, within my knowledge, that possess so many characteristics pointed out by the Revelator. Perhaps there are other peculiarities which, if I understood more perfectly, would strengthen me in the belief that the *Millennial Church* is, in truth, the one to which both the Prophets and Apostles had a prophetic allusion. This being established, leaves no room for disputation.

M. It has long been a subject of dispute, whether it can be said of any, that in their mouth is found no guile; and that they are without fault before God. Although volumes have been written upon this subject, both for and against; it has produced no good. Both parties have exhibited but little of that Christian meekness, which is indispensably necessary to render any theological discussion, profitable. Those who have been the most zealous advocates for Christian perfection, have evinced, by their spirit and conduct, that they are the farthest from it.

Christ said, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven, is perfect." And the Apostle says, "He that doeth righteousness, is righteous, even as he (that is, Christ,) is righteous." Those who "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth," *attain to Christian perfection*, and no others. As to modern disputants and their productions, but little or no light can be obtained from them. The simple truth is, Christ never required perfection, when he knew, at the same time, that perfection was unattainable. Let the leaders of the different religious sects "deny themselves, take up their cross and follow Christ," and it will, at once, end the dispute with them about Christian perfection. Let them rid themselves of the violent antipathies to which this subject has given rise; and no longer harbor in their bosoms, those asperities that have generated the most unfriendly feelings with those who look to them for instruction. When they come to all this, sinless perfection will not appear to them a *groundless hypothesis*. They then will see that we have given no forced application of the vision of John.

You say that other peculiarities, if explained to your understanding, might convince you that the *Millennial Church* was the subject of ancient prediction. It was said of the primitive Christians, that they were a "*peculiar people*." Those who compose the *Millennial Church*, are no less so. But they have no more peculiarities than the gospel requires.

B. In many important respects, I acknowledge there is a striking similarity; but still, one peculiarity in relation to your manner of worship, I cannot understand. I have been told you worship God in the dance. This, to me, is altogether unaccountable. I cannot see the propriety of this mode of worship. There is but little or no scripture testimony to warrant you in turning the dance into religious worship.

M. I am well aware of the prejudices that pervade the community in relation to this manner of Christian worship. I well recollect when

but a youth, that thoughtless boys who were my associates, turned this manner of worship into ridicule, by a pretended imitation of God's people. This was done in the presence of men who, I supposed, were venerable for their age and piety. Instead, however, of reproving such indiscreet behaviour, they evidently applauded their children in all their rashness and impiety. As if to make manifest the displeasure of God, these heedless youth were all taken out of the world at a premature age. The only one remaining among those who were together on that occasion, is the writer of this article, and he refused to join his comrades from an impulse that never will be forgotten while life remains.

Little did I think at that time that ever I should be found in the ranks of a people whose very worship was made a theme of merriment, not only to thoughtless youth, but to venerable age. But so it is. And so far from this being a subject of shame or regret, I glory in it, as the consummation of my happiness. What if the world deride this manner of worship? Does this prove that it is not of God? The Almighty declared that he would "*create all things new*." Why not, with the rest, establish a new order of worship? About the time of the commencement of this testimony, the religious community was wrapped in the gloom of impenetrable darkness. A form of worship was kept up; but it consisted of a round of ceremonies, without spirit or power. When the night of ages passed off, and the morning began to dawn, words were inadequate to express the joy, the ecstasy of those who found themselves awakened from their long slumber. There were duties appropriate to that vast occasion; and those to whom this ample field of labor was opened, burst from the trammels of blind tradition, and involuntarily united their bodily organs with their mental faculties, in the praise of God. They did not know, themselves, at that time, that it was the fulfilment of ancient prediction. They yielded to the dictates of the spirit; and though it was a source of mortification, yet it was crowned with the blessing of Heaven. From this circumstance, how can you doubt that this manner of worship originated from God? Where is the Christian sect that can appeal to such a source as this, as the origin of their mode of worship? I mention this to show, that I have not assumed ground that cannot be sustained by incontrovertible facts, in support of which, we not only have the testimony of those who were engaged in this work from the beginning; but an appeal can be made to those who were foremost in the ranks of opposition, in the corroboration of the truth of this statement.

You may suppose that I have attached undue importance to this circumstance. Such a supposition is groundless. Had the founders of the United Society followed the footsteps of the church of anti-christ, in this respect, it would have been incompatible with the nature of their testimony. It was the design of Heaven, that there should be an entire renovation in the religious world, both as to theory and practice; and that, too, by the instrumentality of individuals whose very condition in life was inconsistent with the conclusion, that such a change was the result of human wisdom.

This worship was established by the agency of the Holy Spirit. They acted in reference to no scripture testimony. To their apprehension, it was *sui generis*, in the Christian world. They would not have voluntarily united in a mode of worship, that had a direct tendency to bring upon them such a flood of contumely and reproach. There can

be no reasonable suspicion that it was their object to impose on the credulity of man. The sure influence of time is the proper test of the correctness or incorrectness of any established theory. Man cannot receive a lasting blessing in the pursuit of a course which *Divine Wisdom* disapproves. But those who, for a series of years, have worshiped God in this way, can best testify as to the moral and practical influence it has had upon them. And it cannot be hid, even from the world, that they have received innumerable tokens of the Divine approbation and favor.

B. I cannot easily bring my mind to believe, that God approves of turning dancing into religious worship. I have ever looked upon dancing as a recreation, inconsistent with the Christian character. I therefore cannot unite with you in this.

M. If you view it in the light of a vain recreation, I am not surprised that you consider it inconsistent with the Christian character. But because it has been practiced by the dissolute and unprincipled, in their nocturnal reveries, this is no reason why it should not be turned to an act of solemn worship. I see no reason why the bodily, as well as the vocal powers, should not be consecrated to the worship of God. Both have been prostituted to the cause of wickedness; and yet the latter, by general consent, has been devoted to Christian worship. The objection is equally as strong against the one, as the other. Songs have been composed and set to the most musical tunes, with the design of exciting lascivious desires. The dens of prostitutes have resounded with the harmony of vocal music; but no one objects to the introduction of "the anthem and the song," into houses of social worship. I am at a loss to account for the inconsistency of those who reject the one, while they cordially receive the other.

B. Your remarks throw light upon the subject so far as to convince me of the impropriety of condemning this manner of worship, merely on account of dancing being practiced by the irreligious and profane; but still I cannot say that I am convinced of the propriety of worshipping God in the dance.

M. You cannot but see the reasonableness of consecrating both body and spirit to the service of God. Vocal powers are the special gift of the Almighty, and when properly improved, give increased animation to devotional exercises. The bodily organs were given us for the noble purpose of moving in union in the praise of God. With the eye we behold the glory of our Maker in the vast system of creation and providence. With the ear, we hear the sweet sound of the gospel of peace and salvation. With the tongue, we joyfully utter forth the high praises of the Divine Majesty; and why should not the hands and the feet, move in unison with these organs in the same delightful employment?

It is almost the uniform practice of all to bend the knee when in the attitude of prayer. Why not move the feet and the hands as expressive signs of triumph and rejoicing? There is such a union between the body and the mind, that the one is affected by the other. When the mind is depressed, the countenance appears dejected; and every bodily organ is influenced by one common sympathy.

The first establishment of this order, was preceded by the most intense anxiety. Many were ardently seeking for full redemption. They were convinced of their alienation from God. And notwithstanding they

had seasons of ecstasy, they were soon followed by depression and sorrow. Sad reflection taught them that an important change must be wrought in them before they could inhabit the *Celestial City*. When the way of the cross was opened to their understandings, they cordially embraced it, and soon found by happy experience, that salvation for which they had so long and so zealously prayed; and such was the ecstasy of holy delight to which their minds soared, that they were involuntarily led by the fervency of their feelings, to unite all their bodily powers as expressive of that joy which words could not utter.

Though they did not act, as before observed, in reference to scripture authority, yet this worship is the subject of ancient prediction. This is the only order on the face of the globe, to which these prophecies can apply. I know there are great pretensions to sanctity among the Christian sects, but all oppose dancing as an act of worship. "To the law and to the testimony. If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

It is a fact worthy of notice, that not only the present dispensation was ushered in through the female; but this mode of religious worship was prefigured under the law in the female. When the children of Israel were redeemed from the bondage of Egypt, they sung a song of thanksgiving. "And Myriam, the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her, with timbrels and with dances." When it is considered that the deliverance of the Israelites from the bondage of Pharaoh, is a striking figure of the full redemption from sin, experienced in the present glorious day; it is a fact worthy of serious attention, that both the one and the other, gave rise to the same religious exercise. The Israelites did not feel satisfied with merely expressing their devout acknowledgements; but brought into exercise every faculty of the body, expressive of the joy of their hearts on that eventful occasion.

When Jephthah returned from the slaughter of the Ammorites, "his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances." On all occasions of victory over enemies, it was the ancient custom of God's people to express their joy and thankfulness in this way. When Goliath fell before the "stripling of Israel," and a signal victory was gained over the Philistine armies, "the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing." When the yearly feast was kept in Shiloh, the daughters of Shiloh came out to "dance in dances."

In the time of the Babylonish captivity, the Israelites were deprived of this sacred exercise, and the prophet lamented this sad reverse; "the joy of our heart is ceased; *our dance is turned into mourning.*"

B. The scriptures you have quoted, refer altogether to the female. There is no evidence that the male united in these exercises.

M. In reference to the *latter day*, and the very manner of worship that should accompany it, the prophet Jeremiah says, "Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord:—Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both *old men* and young together; for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them and make them rejoice from their sorrow." It appears from this, that the term *virgin*, applies to the *male* as well as the female, and that at the time this manner of worship should be revived, the church should be constituted of virgin characters. This is a direct and positive proof of two of the most peculiar characteristics of the *United Society*.

To what order can this prediction apply, if not to this? Take a survey of the civilized world in every age, and point to the period of time when this prophecy has had its fulfilment. Such an attempt is utterly vain. Here it is fulfilled and no where else. What an overwhelming evidence is this of the correctness of this mode of worship! And is it not enough to satisfy the minds of the most incredulous, who are void of prejudice, that this is the order of God? I speak with confidence, because I know what I affirm to be true. The learned world, as it is called, may spurn at the idea of dancing in social worship; the modern pharisee may put on a sanctimonious air, and pretend that his devout soul is galled, in witnessing such a profanation of the "*Lord's day*." Such pretend to take the scriptures for their guide, and yet refuse to receive instruction from that sacred volume. Did they prayerfully study the bible with the design of being benefitted by its sacred contents, they would not hold up as objects of derision, the very people that fulfil them in their system of doctrine and manner of worship. Let the pages of inspiration be examined with the care and attention which their importance demands, and it will at once be seen that the *United Society* is a striking illustration of the truth of scripture prophecy.

In order to come to a correct knowledge of the truths of the divine testimony, the mind should be unbiased by prejudice and uncontaminated by a false theory. Preconceived opinions should have no influence to enlist the feelings or warp the judgment. Blind mortals have decided from what source knowledge must originate. They have not the humility to receive instruction from any other quarter. In consequence of this, thousands and millions are necessarily debarred from a participation in the sublime joys which those, and those only receive, who travel the narrow way that leads to life.

You profess to have made the scriptures your study, and you think you look to them as the rule of your faith and practice. This is a common pretension among all orders. Why is there such a diversity of opinions among them? The reason is obvious. Instead of establishing their opinions by the divine standard, they are indebted to blind tradition for their doctrinal sentiments, and bend the scriptures to their support. They consequently know but little about the Bible, only as it has a supposed bearing on their peculiar notions. This is the only way by which I can account for the gross blunder you committed, in supposing that the scriptures relating to this ancient mode of worship, exclusively referred to females. I know that the passages to which you have been cited, are mostly of that character. But this is one of the strongest evidences in proof of the point at issue. They are looked upon, not so much on account of their being *direct authority*, as figurative representations of the manner of worship now established in the church of Christ. The first Mother of the New Creation was led by a divine impulse, to go forth in the dance; and this appears to have been the case in relation to those with her. Indeed, it is a matter of doubt, whether she knew there was a solitary example in the scriptures, to countenance this religious exercise. This dispensation took its rise in the power of God, and not in the wisdom of man. We make no pretensions to claim a gallery of literary characters as pillars in this glorious temple. It is true, there are men of literary attainments in this communion, but their learning must be subservient to the gift of God.

It is by no means a truth, that this religious exercise was anciently

confined to the female. When the Ark was carried from Obed-Edom to the city of David, it is said that "David and all Israel danced before the Lord." This was not in fact a moderate exercise; for it is said, "*David danced with all his might.*" Though this was looked upon as a frantic exercise by Michael, the daughter of Saul, and she "despised him in her heart;" David said, "I will yet be more vile than thus." Of what consequence is even the contempt of the "uncircumcised in heart and life?" Shall those who are in the light of this dispensation, be swerved by their dictation? The Jewish Ark was the talisman of their national security. Whilst this accompanied them, they were victorious over all their enemies. Have we not the Moabite, the Ammonite, the Jebuzite, and the Parasite, to contend with? And while we have the ark of the *true testimony* with us, we are sure of victory. "To him that overcometh, will I give to sit upon my throne, even as I have overcome, and am sit down with my heavenly Father upon his throne." That God approves of this manner of worship, is further evident from the exhortation of the Psalmist, "O, clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph. Sing unto the Lord a new song; sing his praise in the congregation of the saints. *Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King; let them praise his name in the dance.*" It is evident from this quotation, that God requires not only the tongue, but the *hands and the feet* to be active in devotional exercise. But where is this conformed to, if we except this order? Here this manner is established in its original simplicity and power. Here are all the faculties both of soul and body brought into exercise, and devoted to the high praises of the God of the whole earth. How indescribably beautiful does an assembly appear, when actuated by the same impulse, all moving in the same harmonious concord, all united in "praising God in the dance!"

I was called, in Providence, to spend a part of my public life with the natives of the "*far West.*" My attention was particularly arrested by a religious exercise which they held at stated periods, in which they worshipped the "*Great Spirit*" in the dance. I could gain no information among them as to the origin of this religious worship, except that it was practised by their fathers from the remotest ages. Whilst in this exercise, they were as solemn as eternity. Their songs appeared to be measured, and their gestures corresponded with them. In some parts they were peculiarly animated, and all carried the appearance of the most profound devotion. I thought at the time, that "*learned ministers*" of this country ought to go to the "*native sons of the forest,*" and receive a lesson of profitable instruction. When I witnessed this scene, my mind was struck with unusual solemnity. Something whispered me that their manner of worship originated from a good source. I have not the shadow of a doubt, but what it was dictated by the Spirit of eternal truth.

When I first witnessed the worship of the *United Society* at Enfield, this came fresh to my mind. At that time, I exerted all my powers to suppress my feelings, but it was in vain. When the circle was formed, and the singers faced inward, I beheld a striking similarity, both in form and manner. I knew that they could not have borrowed it, the one from the other. It therefore must have originated from the unerring spirit of truth. This circumstance tended to confirm me in what I had long believed; that the worship of these natives in the dance, was acceptable to God, and refreshing to those who were engaged in it. I regret that I was not sufficiently acquainted with their language to understand

the sentiments of their songs. To them, they must have been very melodious and animating; but to me, the deep guttural sounds peculiar to the native tongue, were very harsh and unmusical. There appeared to be a union of action and sentiment, and their motions gave the impression that they were deeply and solemnly engaged in this devout exercise.

However trivial this circumstance may appear to some, yet to me it is a convincing proof of the correctness and utility of this sacred worship. I was led from this occasion, to meditate deeply on this subject. And the result of my examination of the scriptures relating to this point, has established me in the belief, that the worship of God in the dance is ordained of Heaven, as the only proper way, in which all the faculties can harmonize, in bearing a part in the adoration of the ever-living and true God.

B. I understand there is another peculiarity which appears unaccountable to me, as you profess to be Christians. It is said, you never or but seldom pray. Now, we read of the ancient Worthies being a praying people. Jesus set an example of prayer. Paul frequently prayed, and so did all the apostles.

M. I know that this slander has, with others, been industriously circulated, but without the least shadow of truth. There is no order of people, to say the least, that pray more devoutly, fervently, and effectually; and they follow the example and counsel of Christ in the discharge of this duty.

B. But I have been told by those who have attended your meetings, that prayer is wholly neglected.

M. I have no doubt but what you have been told so by many who are as ignorant of the nature of prayer, as they are of the principles of Christianity in general.

B. It is the practice of ministers of all orders with which I am acquainted, to introduce their devotions with an "*address to the throne of grace.*"

M. Without doubt you speak the truth. And they generally preface this harrangue to the Deity, with "Let us pray," when perhaps the minds of both speaker and hearer are roving to the ends of the earth. Such formal prayers are generally made up of flattering compliments to the Deity in the first place, an affectation of humility in the second, and a variety of foolish petitions in the third. Logicians would call the first part the exordium; the second, the peroration; and the third, the close. This passes with the world for prayer. In the estimation of such, we may be viewed as a prayerless people.

It is really sickening, to listen to the terms used in the introduction to these prayers. One would suppose they had searched all the vocabularies in Christendom, to find words with which they could compliment the Almighty! Flattery consists in attributing to a person, perfections which he is not supposed to possess. I have heard preachers tell the Almighty that he was "infinite in love, wisdom and power," in their prayers; whilst their sermons contained sentiments which limited the Deity in all these attributes! This is adulation with a witness! They extol the Almighty as a Being infinite in goodness and mercy, but at the same time contend that He deals with a portion of the human race with the rigour of "*vindictive justice.*" Our Heavenly Father possesses these attributes in all their perfection; but I see no propriety or neces-

sity of telling him of it a thousand times over. These preachers would pursue a course much more consistent and profitable, to exert their powers to convince mankind in general of these weighty truths. Instead of clothing the Almighty with the habiliments of wrath and vengeance, they should inculcate a more rational theory, one that exhibits the immutability and harmony of the divine attributes, as displayed in the vast system of creation, in the kingdom of divine Providence, and in the records of holy truth. It is very absurd indeed, for a minister to advance sentiments in his sermon directly opposed to what he expresses in his prayers. I have witnessed so many instances of this description, that I cannot feel clear in not reproving so shameful a departure from every principle of propriety. But a few have the independence to depart from the rules that custom has established in their religious exercises. Fashion appears to take the lead in almost every thing appertaining to religion. It is the fashion for modern preachers to introduce their worship by saying, "Let us introduce the solemnities of God's worship by reading and singing to his praise, a hymn," &c. Then follows a *fashionable* prayer, usually very long. Next in order comes a *fashionable* sermon, made up of a multitude of divisions and sub-divisions. By this time it is presumed the audience is fatigued with the monotonous exercise; a short prayer, with a benediction, must close the whole. Out rushes a promiscuous concourse, glad enough to be relieved from the intolerable burden of the day.

The second *grand* division of the long prayer consists in a recapitulation of "sins of omission and commission." The preacher uses the pronoun *we*, so that in this *fashionable* confession, the minister and the audience are all included. I will give you a specimen of this confession. "Lord, *we* acknowledge *ourselves* hell-deserving creatures. *We* are full of wounds and bruises and putrifying sores, from the *head* to the sole of the foot. There is no soundness in *us*. *We* are like a cage of unclean birds. Lord, hadst thou been *just* to have marked iniquity against *us*, *we* should have been ere this time, in the grave among the dead, and in hell among the damned. *Our* hearts are a sink of corruption. In thought, word and deed, we daily transgress thy holy law. *We* are exalted to Heaven in point of privileges, but *we* habitually abuse them. *We* do what *we* ought not, and *we* leave undone what *we* ought to do. In our very prayers, *we* commit sin enough to damn us to all eternity. *Our* hearts are deceitful above all things, and *desperately wicked*." Thus the sins of the multitude are confessed by this scape-goat, and the people return as they came, well satisfied, that though their condition is bad, it is no worse than the minister's, to whom they look for religious instruction.

The preacher laments the wretched condition of *the wicked*, and pre-
sages the awful doom that awaits them. Righteousness, according to his views, has no reference to the emendation of the character. Every attempt to improve that, is an additional weight to sink the soul in the regions of despair. He contends that there are millions as good by nature, and *much better by practice*, than he is, now in hell, with "devils and damned spirits!" Righteousness, he contends, is a mysterious word, to which he has no claim, but by imputation.

The truth is, hypocrisy is manifest, on the very face of the above confession. They do not mean to be understood that they are as bad as their words imply. It is a part of a *fashionable* prayer made before a

fashionable audience. A wag on one occasion took the liberty to report a certain orthodox deacon in the same light in which he acknowledged himself to stand before God. The deacon, in a rage, threatened to prosecute him for a libel, and demanded his authority for his slanderous assertions. I had it, said he, from a man of strict veracity. Unless you reveal the name, said the deacon, reddening with fury, I will immediately commence an action. Should the person be of respectable standing in society, he shall pay dear for his presumption. I demand the name of your informant. I would inform you that he belongs to the orthodox church in this place, said the wag. So much the worse, said the deacon. Now I tell you plainly, I do not wish to be put off. If he should be my own brother, I would not favor him. He is not your brother, but a very near relation to him, replied the wag. This is the last time I shall request you to reveal your author, said the deacon. You must abide the consequences of your libellous report. If I must tell you my author, it was *you yourself*. I myself, said the deacon, I cannot understand you. Did you not say last Thursday evening, at the union prayer meeting, that you were "the vilest of the vile?" That you were "inclined to every thing that was bad, and to nothing that was good?" Did you not acknowledge yourself one of the greatest of sinners? I only took you at your own word and reported you accordingly. I did not mean to be understood as I said, replied the deacon, and you knew it. You are looked upon as a man of truth by those who are the best acquainted with you, replied the other; but still you appear to dispense with that virtue when you speak to God. I should suppose that if ever there was a time when the truth should be spoken in sincerity, it is when we address the Almighty in prayer.

How often has God been charged with injustice by these confessions in vocal prayer! "Hadst thou been just to have marked iniquity against us," &c. By this statement, it appears that in order for God to extend his clemency to the sinner, he must dispense with justice! Justice and mercy, when rightly understood, are sure to harmonize, and the one is as lovely as the other. In the great work of salvation, they are equally essential, and in fact the one might as well be dispensed with as the other.

The last *grand* division of a long prayer consists in a variety of petitions. These correspond with the various wants of the people in the particular section where the prayer is put up. But it usually happens, that few are agreed as to what shall be prayed for. Some pray for a religious excitement; whilst others look upon it as a "*moral desolation*," and as fervently pray that it might be suppressed. Some pray for rain, whilst others find it for their interest to pray for fair weather. In case of war, when two armies meet in battle array, they usually have their respective chaplains, who fervently pray to the same God, that their enemies might be discomfited and slain! How fervently do the preachers of the different orders pray that their respective parties might be built up! And do they not exult at the misfortunes and downfall of each other? The fact is, what is esteemed a blessing by one, is frequently a sore affliction to another.

Our Savior severely reproveth the Scribes and Pharisees, on account of their long prayers. Not that vocal prayer in itself considered, was condemned, but the ostentation and pride which they exhibited, were the subject of reprehension. "Be not as the Scribes and Pharisees, which love to pray *standing* in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets

but when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut too the door, pray to thy Father which seeth in secret, and thy Father shall reward thee openly." It appears from this, that mental prayer is the most acceptable, as being free from that vanity which seeks the applause of men.

You must acknowledge that it is not necessary to pray vocally in order to be heard of God. The prophets of Baal manifested their zeal, not by the purity of their lives, and the sincerity of their devotion, but by their excessive noise, and other extravagancies equally ridiculous. The prophet Elijah ironically called upon them to "*cry louder.*" Perhaps, said he, "your God is asleep," or he may be "on a journey." At a camp-meeting, I have clearly seen a rivalry among the preachers in the praying circle, and he who had the strongest lungs and was the "longest winded," generally bore off the palm!

B. I don't doubt but what you are correct in saying that it is not necessary to pray vocally, to be heard of God. But the utility of it consists in edifying each other. Mental prayer cannot have this effect.

M. Supposing that it cannot. Are there not other means better calculated to edify one another? There would be more propriety in addressing the person or persons whom we wish to edify. Every duty should have its appropriate place. To address the Deity is one thing, and to address our fellow mortals is another. They should not be blended together. The sincere desire of the heart, without being expressed by words, is a prayer to God. This is the kind of prayer St. Paul had in view when he exhorted his brethren to "pray without ceasing, and in all things give thanks." This could not be done vocally. He therefore must mean that we should uniformly preserve a prayerful spirit, a meek temper and an undeviating confidence in God.

Our Saviour generally retired from the multitude when he prayed. There is no instance, to my recollection, of his making a formal prayer. Indeed he admonished his disciples against it. If you bring up what is called the Lord's prayer, as an example, it altogether condemns both the Pharisees of his day and the hypocrites of modern ages in their vain repetitions. That prayer contains many useful instructions, embraced in few words, and was designed to "*edify*" his followers.

Those who compose the *United Society* are not a prayerless people. In this they closely follow the example of Christ, as they do in every thing else. They pray *unitedly*. Here there is no discord. They make no pompous display of words, calculated to excite the attention of the giddy multitude, nor do they court the applause of men. The duty of prayer is well understood, and the blessings that accrue, are duly appreciated. Here God is worshiped "in the beauty of holiness. Hypocrisy has no place in it, as watchfulness is enjoined as a concomitant virtue. Consequently "holy hands are lifted up without wrath and doubting." As "whatsoever is not of faith, is sin;" we pray for nothing inconsistent with the nature of the divine attributes. Whether we sing or pray, it is "with the spirit and with the understanding." This is the cause of the signal answers to prayer, which have been witnessed in a great variety of instances. Here the spirit of prayer pervades the whole body. Such is the union of the order, that if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it. If one member rejoice, all rejoice together; so that both in prayer and praise, there is a general reciprocity of feeling. Whether we consider the doctrinal sentiments, the spirit of union, or the important

effects resulting from both, all bear an exact resemblance to the apostolic church in its original purity and power. A prayer-meeting was once held about a mile from the place where I put up, the wind being fair, I distinctly heard them. The cattle roared in the yard, and the "boding owl" in a distant forest kept up the concert. The whole, added to the gloominess of a dark night, made such an impression on my mind, that I was led to examine the scriptures, to see if there was any example for such a mode of procedure, and I could find none, if we except the one set by the prophets of Baal, in the days of Elijah.

I have been the more particular upon this point, as the objection is frequently urged against us, that we depart from the common practice of professed christians with respect to their *manner* of praying to the Deity. I leave the whole for your serious reflection, with the request that you should not construe any thing that I have said, as an evidence of an uncharitable feeling on my part. I am fully persuaded, that there are many sincere people, who really believe that God requires them to unite in this religious exercise, and feel a blessing arising from the impression of having discharged their duty to God and to their fellow creatures in this way.

DIALOGUE IX.

B. Your remarks on prayer appear to be both scriptural and reasonable. If our aim is to instruct mankind, it surely is more consistent with that object, to direct our conversation to *them*. This being admitted, mental prayer is much more suitable, to be directed to the Almighty. I agree with you in the suggestion that vocal prayer has been a cloak to hypocrisy, and in repeated instances, I have discovered as much vanity in those who are reputed, "*gifted in prayer*," as in any body of people whatever. Ostentation is bad enough, when exhibited by persons who make no pretensions to religion; but when a person discovers that contemptible weakness in solemn prayer, it becomes intolerable.

I have been credibly informed, that you hold a community of interest. I should like to know where you get your authority for this, and the principles on which a united inheritance is established.

M. In the first place, I would inform you that your information is correct. This is a striking peculiarity of the *United Society*. This has been inculcated from the first establishment of the order, not only as being consistent with scripture testimony, but the very nature of that bond of union in things spiritual presupposes the indispensable necessity of a union in things temporal.

You ask for authority that sustains us in the position we have assumed in this respect. I assure you this has not been done without the very best authority. I would cite you to the second chapter of Acts, for direct authority for a united inheritance. We there have a particular account of the circumstances attendant on the establishment of the first

christian church at Jerusalem. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language." "We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God." Peter stood up in the midst of the eleven and preached Christ Jesus. He spake with the authority of the Holy Ghost, and the stoutest hearts fell before his word. "And they that gladly received his word were baptized, (with the Holy Ghost;) and the same day there were added unto them, about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul; and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. *And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods and parted them to all, as every man had need.*"

This testimony is so plain, that there is no dispute from any quarter, but what the first gospel church enjoyed a community of interest. I shall use no argument to prove a point that is universally conceded by all. If this is not good authority for holding all things common, I should be glad to have you tell me what proof would be sufficient to support this practice. It may be contended, that we should not look upon this as a precedent, as we have no account that it was the general practice of the christian churches at that day. It appears by the above extract, that the church at Jerusalem, were blessed with very special manifestations, and they were led by the powerful operations of the Spirit, to a consecration of their worldly substance, to the common benefit of each other. This was the Mother church under that dispensation, and because she was not imitated in this respect, by all her children, this is no reason why we should not. The churches of anti-christ imitate them very closely in their defects, but unfortunately for them, this is not the worst of their case. As to purity of faith and practice, they do not even pretend to come into the neighborhood of the churches established among the Gentiles. It is an interesting fact, that the first church established under the gospel, should be distinguished by this peculiarity. You may easily perceive, from this, the exact similarity between that and the church established under the present dispensation. Both moved by the dictates of the same spirit, and consequently we witness the same results. Any difference, could it be pointed out, would weaken my argument! But I defy the world to do it.

B. However pure the first gospel church was, yet it was followed by a total apostacy. Is there not reason to believe a similar fate will await this?

M. I think not. The present "kingdom is an everlasting kingdom," and this "dominion is never to be destroyed." The kingdom and dominion are not to be understood in a literal sense. All earthly kingdoms and dominions are destined to dissolution. This government is the

government of the passions. The victory is over "the carnal mind, that is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." The establishment of the everlasting kingdom of righteousness, succeeds the death of the carnal mind and every thing appertaining to it. The work of the latter day is slow in its progress, but it can never be overturned. It will fully accomplish the divine purpose in the great plan of salvation. There has been a gradual increase from the first establishment of this order to the present day. I do not particularly allude to numbers, but to union and power, which constitute the only real strength of any community. This statement may appear strange to you; it is nevertheless, correct. Should hundreds prove treacherous, and turn away from us, instead of diminishing, it would tend to increase our strength. This may appear paradoxical at first view, but a more mature reflection will convince you that it is a rational conclusion. In the order of God, every post must be filled, and the treacherous must give place to the honest in heart. I have told you before, that here "all things are created new." In all societies and churches, established on a different foundation, should their members secede, they look upon it as a great calamity, an irreparable injury, as their strength becomes diminished in the same proportion. But here there is a new face to things of this description. The rotten-hearted are but clogs to the wheels of the triumphant car of truth, and the sooner they are out of the way, the better. The advancement of light is irresistible. This is a mysterious order, hid to the world. "The vulture's eye hath not seen it, neither hath the lion's whelp trodden it." It is alone for the meek of the earth. The haughty and the proud in their imagination tower above it. Such can have "no part nor lot in this matter." They disdain to investigate this subject, as they have no disposition to come into this order, even should they be convinced of its truth. But the work still goes on, and its course will still be "*onward*," until the grand consummation of all things.

In the fourth chapter of Acts, we have a very pointed proof of a community of interest in the primitive church: "And the multitude of them that believed, were of one heart and one soul: neither said any of them, that aught of the things that he possessed was his own; *but they had all things common*. And with great power gave the apostles witness, of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands, or houses, sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. And Joses, who, by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas (which is, being interpreted, the son of consolation) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet."

The first believers "*were of one heart and one soul*." A union of interest followed in consequence. How could it be otherwise? No one will presume to deny, who reads the above extract, the obvious principles which it establishes as peculiar to the apostolic church. This evidence to sustain a united inheritance, is obtained from the very fountain head. It is an appeal, that will admit of no dispute. The professed christian frequently says to me, You have united with a body who hold "*all things common*," in imitation of the ancient apostles! As much as if this is a sufficient objection to the testimony. And no doubt it is of

sufficient weight to deter many from forming a union which strikes at the root of selfishness. They had much rather nourish this passion in the order of the world, especially when they can have the reputation of being very good christians, than to sacrifice it, in imitation of Christ and his apostles. But whilst in possession of a selfish nature, it is arrogance to pretend to follow the pattern left us by that *name*, which they have assumed. The world is struck with the impression that there is something truly apostolic in the community of interest maintained by the *United Society*. They dare not presume to oppose it in word, though they are generally united in opposing it in practice. What is this but an acknowledgement that it is the true order of God ?

I know that an attempt has frequently been made, to have all things common under the pretence of imitating the first christian church, by those who were far from indulging the most distant idea of denying self in any of its gratifications ; and the consequence has been that they have not held together but little longer than they were in forming and maturing their plans. A community of this description cannot be sustained without a practical conformity to the cross of Christ. It is utterly vain to make the attempt. A huge fabric may be reared, but it will rest on the sand. Being destitute of the *cement*, necessary to hold its various parts together, it must fall under its own weight. Unless " the flesh is crucified with its *affections and lusts*, no body of people can long hold together on the principle of a common interest. The experiment has frequently been tried, but without success. How much better it would be for families, could they agree to hold their property in common, even in the order of the world. Though the attempt has frequently been made, yet they have as often failed. Selfishness and partiality imperceptibly gain such an ascendancy, that their hopes are baffled and their designs entirely frustrated. Though professed christians of one faith, and bound together by the ties of nature, they soon find it more convenient to separate and maintain a distinct interest ! On whatever side you approach this establishment, there is nothing meets the eye but what is reasonable and beautiful. This testimony requires a band, stronger than the ties of nature, a charm that binds the people of God into one indissoluble body. Here every member performs its appropriate function. That partiality, which is nurtured in the garden of nature, can have no place in the paradise of God. Here father and mother, brother and sister, wives and children, after the order of nature, are not known. Should these once be admitted, all the passions which have grown out of these ties, would come in with them. Then contention, strife, jealousy, envy, with all their concomitant evils would take a permanent seat. Instead of union and harmony, and love, we should see substituted discord, strife and animosity ! This order has stood the test of nearly half a century, and during this time, there has been an increase of every thing that is praiseworthy, of every thing that is lovely. The order of this church is an emblem of the order of the invisible world. And that, for which christians so fervently pray, and which they hope to witness in eternity, is here realized, in all its perfection. This establishment was not the result of human calculation. The pattern was formed by the hand of the *Great Jehovah*, and from the commencement, it has been the object of his peculiar care. Here He has placed his name. It rests on an imperishable basis. The loftiest mountains may be removed ; cities may be demolished ; kingdoms and empires may be revolutionized ; both the

natural and political world may pass through ever so many and great changes ; but still *Mount Zion* will stand secure. She is walled by the power of Omnipotence, and effectually guarded by an eye that never sleeps. Even the temporal calamities, so unavoidable among the inhabitants of the earth, are felt but lightly by those who fulfil the law of Christ, by cheerfully bearing one another's burdens.

I wish you to bear in mind, that this church is composed of those who were differently educated, and consequently were in possession of a variety of prejudices as well as different dispositions and habits. You may call these discordant materials to make a church of, and speak truly. These materials are worked into this building, without the sound of an axe or hammer. And however discordant they were in a state of nature, the square and the plumb line have been applied to them, and they are now admirably fitted to the places they were designed to fill.

Here the idle become industrious, the prodigal contracts habits of frugality, the parsimonious become generous and liberal, the intemperate leave the tavern and the grog-shop, the debauchee forsakes the haunts of dissipation and infamy, the swearer leaves off his habits of profanity, the liar is changed into a person of truth, the thief becomes an honest man, and the nasty sloven becomes neat and clean.

B. I readily grant that these changes have taken place in relation to some of my acquaintance who have united with the society. This is a fact too notorious to be disputed. You have the reputation of being industrious, frugal and neat. Your hospitality to strangers has become proverbial, and in your lives, at home and abroad, is discovered an exemplification of all the moral virtues. So far, your order recommends itself to the respectful attention of the public. I look upon it as an enviable situation. I am constrained to pass this encomium upon the *United Society*, not from motives of flattery, but from a sense of justice and duty. It is a character which your society merits, and when I say it, it is but expressing the views of the public generally. But notwithstanding the opinion I have been led to form, of the strict morality of your Society ; yet I should not view it my duty to consecrate my worldly substance, and throw myself on the mercy and charity of any body of people, however noted they may be for the practice of every moral virtue.

M. It is not strange you should come to this conclusion. The public labor under a mistake, in supposing that any underhanded means are resorted to, in order to amass wealth by this religious community. Property consecrated here, in point of law, is the same as that devoted to any other charitable institution. It is well known that a union of interest forms an important item in the faith of believers. But in this, every person must act freely and understandingly. There is no objection to a person's managing his own concerns, till such times as circumstances render it proper, and they are willing to have them managed by the Trustees of the order, who are appointed to take the outward care of the establishment ; and even then it is optional with them, whether to consecrate their property, or to take an inventory of the amount, every cent of which will be restored, when a seasonable application is made for the same. But even in case of a full consecration, it is not the practice of the order to disinherit an heir. A division of the property is made, and each respective heir has their portion assigned him, to be kept in reserve till he or she becomes of age, when it is left to their choice, to consecrate their portion or not, as their faith and feelings shall dictate.

I see nothing in this but what is reasonable and fair. Such is the sense of justice and propriety, that should a person, without due reflection, propose to consecrate his property, it would be rejected. It might make unnecessary trouble; and faith and conviction are of more importance than ever so much worldly substance. The virtue of faith leads a person to the cultivation of habits of industry; and it is by this, that the principal part of the wealth of the order has been gained. But property can never supply the place of conviction and faith.

The order and regularity manifest in the outward concerns of the establishment, have been the theme of worldly applause. There are no objections urged on this ground. This is owing to each member filling a station corresponding with his or her genius or capacity. A multitude of cares do not generally devolve on a single individual. There are some whose genius leads them to one kind of business, and some to another; and it is a general maxim, that the person is the most useful in that employment for which nature designed him.

Some have insinuated, that we have "*task masters*," who assign such a portion of labor to each individual! If this were a truth, I would ask, how such a body of people could be kept together? An arbitrary government would tend directly to bondage, and no person would be willing to spend their days in a place where they were curtailed in the enjoyment of virtuous liberty.

I do not mean by liberty, an unrestrained license to do what we please, and to go where we please. "*Liberty with order*," is our motto. And the real believer, who has the good of the cause at heart, will cheerfully obey those regulations which are made for the good of the society. With such, a conformity to the order of God's house, is consistent with the most perfect freedom. This is no place for such as are bent on the enjoyment of "*licentious liberty*." These are the ones that usually complain of the *bondage* among believers. And as they choose to be where they can act without restraint, they gather to that company whose feelings and conduct are in unison with their own. They go to the world where they belong. As before observed, the society sustains no loss. It is rather a cause of thankfulness to be relieved from a person who is an incumbrance in the house of God.

It should be observed, that whether a person consecrate his substance or not, this is no place for speculative pursuits, to augment selfish interest. Such a course is entirely incompatible with the nature of the institution, and therefore cannot be countenanced. This is an establishment originally designed for the benefit of a spiritual people, bound to each other by spiritual ties. All selfishness is therefore discarded, and all persons of this description are wholly unfit to fill any place of trust in the church of Christ. All secular concerns are performed with the pure motive of establishing the principles of truth and righteousness, and advancing the good of the order in general. Here is a practical illustration of the injunction of the apostle, "*Whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, do all to the glory of God*." And what can better comport with God's glory, than uniformly acting in reference to the building up of his spiritual kingdom on earth, and to the advancement of the best good of mankind?

Both the useful and agreeable are here blended together. That which is exclusively ornamental, without regard to convenience and utility, is inconsistent with the simplicity of the Gospel. Plainness of dress and

equipage, is therefore strictly enjoined. A departure from this, would not only incur a useless expense, but it would have a direct tendency to nurture the spirit of vanity and pride. That rivalry, so general in the course of the world, which has for its object the vain attention of the giddy multitude, is not suffered to enter within these walls.

It is not strange, whilst mankind sedulously follow the vain fashions and customs which prevail, that they are exposed to such sudden reverses. The poor, who are but illy prepared to bear such an unnecessary expense, must fall in with all these extravagancies, or be reproached. And as a want of property is but seldom an evidence of a want of pride, most of the necessities of life, both in relation to food and raiment, are foolishly sacrificed, merely to obtain the gewgaws of fashion!

The spirit of wisdom which established this order, effectually guarded it against all such vanity; and this happy community are consequently saved from the train of evils connected with it. This wise policy, if I may so term it, pervades every department of the institution. Being actuated by one impulse, they harmonize together like the symmetry of parts. Each individual filling the station assigned him, is ambitious only in doing good. Instead of aiming to usurp authority, and exerting an influence over others, that does not come within the sphere of duty corresponding with the diversified talents of each member; all are emulous to excel in the discharge of the obligations appertaining to their respective callings. They are respected and honored, not on account of *filling* exalted and responsible stations, so much as *performing* their duties with fidelity.

The faithful are just to one another; and this important virtue marks all their dealings with mankind in general. No lasting advantage can result from deception. In this way, they have obtained the confidence of the public, who are ready to purchase whatever manufactured articles are offered for sale. Long experience in the use of them, affords satisfactory evidence that the prices set upon them correspond with their real value.

The order and regularity exhibited in the management of the outward concerns of the establishment, have been the subject of general applause; and so far, the public feeling is favorable; but as to the internal regulations of the institution, there is of *necessity*, a great variety of opinions. I do not think strange, considering the inclination of most of people to slander, that imagination has created many aberrations from the rules of decorum and virtue, which in reality do not exist. This has given rise to vague reports, that have been magnified, and industriously circulated to our disadvantage. Should it be any satisfaction to you, I am ready to pledge my veracity, that from personal observation, I am satisfied that these reports are groundless and false. I have found it difficult to retain my gravity, whilst listening to some of these insinuations. They are too ridiculous to merit a candid confutation. The fact is, the external regulations of the order, are a pattern of what is internal. Both alike will bear the test of severe scrutiny. This I say in the sincerity of my soul. I leave these remarks for your meditation. You may have full liberty to propose such questions as in your judgment may tend to elicit any further information as to the theory and conduct of a people so much "wondered at," and all due attention shall be rendered to facilitate your information.

B. There certainly have been instances of gross immorality exposed

to the public. I am far from condemning the society as a body, on this account, as the apostles themselves might be set aside in consequence of the treachery of a Judas. To condemn a whole order, on account of the immorality of a few individuals, would be ungenerous and uncharitable; but still you will not attempt to say, that you have not suffered reproach in this way.

M. Very true—the order has been stigmatized by means of the misconduct of these individuals. And most of the reports put in circulation prejudicial to the society, may be traced to characters of this description. I thank you for the charitable construction you have put upon this subject. I agree with you, that it would be exceedingly disingenuous to pass sentence on this, or any other order, merely because some apostatize from its principles. Your argument upon this point is good; but it is no more than might be expected from a person of your information and candor. I will go farther, and say, that such characters are never held in fellowship, but lose the union of the order; nor is their conduct concealed from the public, especially where they evince a disposition to persevere in their folly. I am the more particular on this subject, as some have the impression that iniquity is concealed here. They suppose that we have the *power* to do it, and pretend to think there is no lack of a *disposition* to avail ourselves of it.

This order differs from all others, in having no church meetings to excommunicate disorderly members. When once a person departs from that rectitude, which the purity of the gospel requires, he consequently loses his confidence. A lack of union ensues; and unless the person make confession, and reform, he will soon find himself in a most uncomfortable situation. In the language of one of our friends, I would say, "*The fire becomes too hot for him;*" he "clears out" to the world.

I have given you but a sketch of the most prominent features of this establishment. If you wish to know more, "come and see" for yourself. It is sincerely hoped, that what has been said, may have a tendency to enlighten your mind, as you have had exhibited to you at this time some of the orders and regulations of an establishment that was the subject of prophecy nearly three thousand years ago! May God grant that from this interview, you may resolve to be one with us. Come on, brother! our hands and our hearts are open. Here is room for you. Here is room for all. I hope to be favored with another interview shortly. *Farewell.*

B. Farewell.

DIALOGUE X.

B. From what has been presented to my mind, I am induced to continue the investigation. You know that in this, I am far from being influenced by party views. I am excited to this, by a sincere desire to know the truth; and I presume you will be ready to pursue this subject to any reasonable length. Though I have not had an opportunity, by

personal observation, to acquaint myself with these things, yet I am confident of the truth of what you say. I hope, before long, to visit your Village; and in such a case, I have no doubt but what I shall find your regulations precisely as you have described them.

M. When I discover a disposition the reverse of this, in any individuals, however anxious they may *pretend* to be to get information, it is my usual practice to withdraw from them as soon as convenient. But little or no benefit results from an interview with such. It is generally, time spent in vain, that might be usefully employed.

I have before expressed it as my belief, that this church was established by Divine authority; and consequently, it is the peculiar object of the Divine protection. This is one of the foundation principles of our faith. Overturn this, and you overturn the whole.

B. All Christian sects make these pretensions; but it is evident all cannot be sustained in them. You must present stronger and more convincing evidences of the truth of your pretensions, than others can, before I shall assent to them. Whenever this is done, no reasonable person should doubt or hesitate.

M. If I do not succeed in this before the close of this interview, I pledge myself to make a frank acknowledgement. Although there is much to confirm this truth in the evidences already presented, yet a variety of others may be brought forward, each separately considered, more than counterbalances the whole of the kind that ever were presented by all the denominations under heaven.

When we commenced this discussion, an observation was made purporting that political revolutions generally preceded moral changes. When the gospel was first established, the condition of the political world was favorable to that event. This was according to the design of God, and consequently circumstances were so arranged by the hand of unerring wisdom as to facilitate the establishment of uncorrupted truth. A great moral change was effected. The sun of righteousness then dawned on a world that had long sat in the regions of darkness and death. The light of truth sprang up in a quarter where it was the least expected. It was sustained by means calculated to baffle the wisdom of man; and, contrary to the expectations of the great and noble of this world, their united efforts could not arrest its progress. What an impetus was given to the cause of truth, by the preaching of Peter and John; and yet these men were called "*ignorant and unlearned*," by the Jewish Rabbis of that day; but "they took knowledge that they had been with Jesus." He is an excellent schoolmaster, for he "*teaches as never man taught*." How quick he taught the languages to Peter and others, at the day of Pentecost. Our "indigent and pious young men" devote several years to the attainment of ministerial qualifications; but have we any evidence that they preach like Peter and John? All the "bodies of divinity," that have been written from John Calvin's to President Edwards', do not contain so much truth as *one lesson taught in the school of Christ*.

The American revolution was one of the most important eras in the annals of history. When we consider its rise, its progress, and its important consequences, we can easily trace the hand of Divine Providence through the whole. Nothing but a continued succession of miracles saved America from the grasp of despotism.

About this time there were several productions put in circulation, calculated to throw light on civil liberty. "The rights of man" were defended with ability. The people were shown, that instead of coming into the world with a *jure divino* entailed upon them, "*The Nobility*" were upon an equality with others; that merit made the only distinction proper to be observed in society. If God designed that some should be born masters, and others, slaves, why do not the former come into the world with a silver spoon in their mouth? Why has not nature marked them by some particular insignia, by which they may be known from the vulgar part of the human species?

The sages of the revolution were prepared in their first manifesto, to proclaim to the tyrants of the Universe, their detestation of bondage, and boldly declared, "that all mankind are created free and equal." The Monarchs of Europe took the alarm, and reasonably concluded, that if this political maxim should generally be received, both King and Nobility must soon leave their seats. Let there be a united effort made "to strangle this infant Hercules in the cradle." The illustrious patriots of that day were prepared to *act* as well as *resolve*. They established their political maxims at the hazard of their property and their lives.

None can read the history of the revolution in all its progress, and resist the impression, that America was under the Divine protection. The colonies possessed but a few means of defence. But this deficiency was more than supplied by that patriotic spirit that could not be overcome. Liberty was achieved, but at a great expense.

The whole was not completed. A great work still remained to be performed. A Constitution must be made, and a government established, that the freedom so dearly purchased, might be secured and defended. Here, a worse bondage than that from which our ancestors were relieved, might have been established and entailed on posterity; but the patriotism and wisdom that achieved our independence, were manifestly displayed in the formation of a constitution every way calculated to secure the rights of the nation.

That unity of action so eminently displayed in establishing national freedom, was produced by an ardent desire to be relieved from a foreign yoke. Although *civil* liberty was pretty generally understood, yet the great mass of the people had given *religious* liberty but little attention. The geniuses that framed the Constitution, were aware of this, and wisely inserted in that instrument, an article which established freedom of conscience. They viewed a state, or law religion, inconsistent with a free government. This was but little thought of at the commencement of the great contest. It is probably well that it was so. Had this been agitated at that early period, defeat would have ensued, instead of success. There would have been a powerful opposition against any innovation on the long established religious customs. But the Almighty ordained in wisdom, that the contest for the establishment of the rights of conscience, should be reserved to an after period. The clergy, as a body, have been opposed to religious liberty and free inquiry. You may see this spirit whenever an attempt is made to modify our laws so that religion may be left free as a matter of conscience between a creature and his Creator. From the establishment of our constitution to the present day, they have maintained a uniform character in this respect. Why were they so violent in their prejudices against that illustrious character who wrote the Declaration of Independence, and who was

one of the chief instruments in establishing freedom of conscience? A more distinguished Statesman, to establish the rights of conscience, perhaps never filled the presidential chair. It was because he, with his coadjutors, struck a death-blow to all their ambitious projects. According to history, this body favored the revolution with their influence; but little did they think then that they were nursing a child that would be the chief instrument in lessening their authority. Instead of this, they would have left it to perish in the waters of the Nile. The wisdom of God is evinced in all this. "He taketh the wise in their own craftiness."

Our Mother country, as she was once called, remains stationary as to her institutions, civil and religious. The church, as it is called, rests upon her vitals, like an incubus; and it is utterly vain for her to struggle for relief. Nothing can save her. She can find no deliverance from this ponderous weight. She must wait the event of a revolution; and that, the wheels of time will surely roll on at no distant period.

The oppressed and persecuted of all nations have fled to this happy country, as an asylum of safety and protection. God designed that this western world should be the theatre of every thing that is great and noble.

The survey I have taken of our country's history, is not irrelevant to the subject under consideration. The first rise of this order took place in England some time previous to the revolutionary war. But it was not consistent with divine wisdom that the church should be gathered into gospel order there. The woman being persecuted, fled to the wilderness of America. Here was a preparatory work corresponding with the greatness of that which was to succeed. The outward wheel was moved by the same invisible power with the wheel within; and many in that day were led to predict a sudden revolution in the moral world. Nor was this the spirit of deception. The political movements, though important in themselves considered, were rendered subservient to the establishment of the principles of righteousness, love, and peace. This was no more than in conformity to the spirit of prophecy, that generally prevailed in the churches that had any portion of the life and power of the gospel. Cast your eye over the known world, and point out the spot more suitable for the erection of the temple of unadulterated truth. The attempt is unavailing. The improvement of the moral and political world moved on simultaneously; and a supernatural agency was equally manifest in both. Success crowned the efforts of those who were engaged in the one, as much as the other. There was a wide difference, however, in the means used to bring about each respective design. The work of the one was spiritual, that of the other was temporal. To establish liberty and equality, our ancestors had to use carnal weapons, and wade through fields of blood. But in establishing the freedom of the soul, the Fathers of this heavenly order had no concern with these. "The weapons of their warfare were not carnal, but spiritual, and mighty through God to the pulling down of the strong holds of the adversary."

It is a fact generally conceded, that the Almighty power of God was exerted in behalf of America, otherwise this country must have been crushed by the gigantic power of Britain. It is equally evident, that this order could never have risen to its present standing, had it not been for the energy of Omnipotence.

During the darkest periods of the revolution, many faint-hearted individuals predicted the overthrow of the cause of liberty. "How is it

possible," said they, "for a mere handful, with such feeble means, to contend successfully against one of the most formidable powers of Europe?" Many in the height of dismay, fled to the enemy for safety and protection, and a poor asylum it proved to be. When they saw the success of that cause they had so shamefully forsaken, they humbly begged for the privilege of returning, that they might enjoy the fruits of the victory obtained by the resolute and faithful.

In the establishment of spiritual freedom, there were many who wished to enjoy the boon without making the necessary sacrifice. They contended that it was impossible to destroy their spiritual enemies, and that those who were engaged in that warfare would finally fall. "How presumptuous," said they, "it is for a few, with such feeble means, to think to effect a work of such vast magnitude?" They fled to the enemy. But they soon found but a poor shelter against the storming blasts of adversity; and when they saw that their brethren were successful in the mighty contest, these *Tories* and *Refugees* humbly solicited the privilege of returning and uniting to sustain that cause which they had neglected and disgraced. And, though mercy was extended, both to the one and the other, yet it was difficult for either to gain that confidence which they had forfeited by their treachery.

I now wish to speak of a preparatory work of another kind, which is no less striking than the one we have considered. There have been what are called, powerful revivals of religion in various sections, and at different times in this country. As to the utility of these excitements, there is a diversity of opinions. Whilst one contends that they are the work of God, another is equally confident that the passions are excited by artificial means, and that the whole is rank delusion. Both think they have sufficient reasons for their different conclusions. Whilst the one expatiates on the numerous instances of good, as the result of these revivals, the other thinks that he is equally successful in pointing out as many evil consequences originating from the same source. Both are equally satisfied with themselves, and dissatisfied with each other.

Whatever side you may take upon this subject, it is my opinion that there has been a mixture of good and evil produced by religious excitements. In every case where there has been a genuine work of the Spirit, the subjects of its operations have been convinced of the necessity of greater degrees of light and purity, and have fervently prayed that they might, in God's time, enjoy the *fulness* of what they experienced then but in *part*.

In 1779, there was a revival of this description, in New Lebanon, and the adjacent towns. Many were brought to a sense of their miserable condition, and felt the need of salvation; but there were not sufficient light and power to save them from the nature of evil; and, consequently the burden of sin was not removed. A certain writer remarks that he "closely observed the operations of this revival; but could not find that it wrought any abiding effect upon its subjects." This was uniformly the case then with all revivals; and the reason was, they were preparatory to the ushering in of the everlasting gospel in all the fulness of its purity and power. They were useful only as they prepared the mind for a farther advancement in the way of holiness.

But instead of progressing along by following the dictates of the spirit in the work of regeneration, the most of them indulged the delusive hope, that they were regenerated and born again, when, in fact, they

were hardly quickened. It was, however, favorable to the opening of the true testimony. As the preaching of John prepared the way for the testimony of Jesus, so the preaching of those who were the principal instruments in producing these revivals, cleared the way for sowing the spiritual seed of the kingdom, by those who were eminently qualified for that purpose. And as John's light was extinguished by reason of the greater light that succeeded it, so the light in these revivals was bedimmed by the full blaze of that sun that shone with such effulgence in the glorious testimony of the first founders of the *United Society*.

The way of these heralds of truth was pointed out by the dictates of heavenly wisdom. They were led along by a divine impulse, and delivered their testimony as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost. Those who rejected their principles, either dwindled into a formality of godliness, denying the power, or united in all the corruptions of this world. It is a truth peculiar to every dispensation of God, that those who reject it, lose every ray of light that they previously had. And though such may have enjoyed a measure of justification, yet if they refuse to follow the greater degree of light presented to them by the hand of God, their justification flees away, and they are left to pursue a weary pilgrimage through life. The harbinger of Christ had a clear view of this subject, and frankly said, that Christ must increase, but he must decrease. This had reference to the appropriate ministry of each, and the ultimate consequence resulting from both. Those who repented at the preaching of John, either cordially received the Gospel of Christ, or receded to the principles of Judaism, and consequently experienced a portion of the calamities that befel that rebellious nation. It is dangerous to trifle with the gifts of Heaven, and resist the light of truth. Many can witness the correctness of this by woful experience.

The establishment of this order in various places, has generally been preceded by a work of preparation; and we have demonstrative proof in all these sections, of similar consequences attending a rejection of this testimony. The Saviour declared that the greater condemnation should rest on Capernaum, Bethsaida, and other places that resisted his doctrine. The same truth holds good in the present day. Those who reject the light of this dispensation when made known to them, bear evident marks of the Divine displeasure. It is seen in the corruption of their morals, and in that state of degradation to which both soul and body become reduced.

You cannot avoid the discovery of the exact similarity in this order and the gospel in its first establishment. The same *Power* and *Wisdom* exhibited in the first, are most clearly discovered in the second. Now I ask you, what order has such a combination of evidences that it originated from God? If there is any, point it out. Present the proofs that shall substantiate their claim to such a holy origin, and I will say no more.

B. You have brought many proofs that appear very forcible and conclusive. I know not how they can be applied to any other order; but if I say that I am fully convinced, you will naturally ask, why I do not come into the order? I wish to hear you farther on the same subject.

DIALOGUE XI.

M. As you have expressed a desire for me to pursue this subject, I cheerfully comply with your request. As long as you listen to me with patience, and evince the same candor, I shall not hesitate to contribute what knowledge I conceive to be necessary, in order to a correct understanding of the leading principles of this Society.

It may be well to inform you that the church at New Lebanon, is what is called the centre of union. There is no body or society that can reasonably expect to prosper without union. The church of Christ is represented very properly by the members of the human system. The head is the centre that gives direction to the whole body. The church is called the body of Christ. It is evident that the spirit of Christ is in the head, or visible head of every true church. This being admitted, there must be some place designated by the spirit to which the members must look for counsel and direction. There can be no movement of importance without the union of the whole body, and this is expressed by the head. There is such a connection between the head and the other members, that they harmonize in every movement. There can be no sudden fluctuations in a body thus united. Whatever is done, is done deliberately; and it is but seldom that circumstances require a retrograde movement.

Wherever there is a preparatory work, and a corresponding feeling pervades the body, the testimony is uniformly opened, and there is no uncertainty as to the success. You cannot expect, consistent with this order, a sudden enlargement; but it is favorable to a gradual increase. Our numbers, when compared with many other denominations, are small; but we have no ambition or desire to increase them, any farther than is consistent with the divine purpose of Him who makes the cause of his own establishment, the object of his peculiar care.

The first visible head by the spirit of prophecy, frequently foretold of an opening and an increase in "*the far west.*" This is the more remarkable, as at that time this immense territory was an uncultivated wilderness. Years rolled on, and but little was thought of this special manifestation. At length one of the most remarkable revivals took place in Kentucky, and the adjoining States, that ever was known since the world began. This State was mostly settled by emigrants from other sections of the union; they, consequently, with their other stuff, carried with them every variety of religious notions. There were adherents to almost every doctrine that divides Christendom; and each had their champions who were ready to defend their respective tenets at the point of the sword. In the midst of this bickering, a few were led to an examination of the scriptures, and became satisfied that none of these orders answered to the purity of New Testament requirements. These sects were so formal, that should any of their communicants be under the influence of the life and power of religion, they were knocked on the head in the outset. "As two cannot walk together except they be agreed," it was soon found necessary to separate. A division was made in the Presbytery of Kentucky, and Robert Marshall, John Dunlavy, Richard M'Neman, Barton W. Stone, and John Thompson, formed a Presbytery of their own, and called it the *Springfield Presbytery*. These

men, as I understand, were the principal leaders in the revival. And I am indebted to Richard M'Neman, for most of the information I have about it. He wrote a small volume, called the *Kentucky Revival*, in which he gave a particular account of some of the most extraordinary operations that ever were seen, since the days of the Apostles. And as he was an eye witness to what he relates, the utmost confidence can be placed in the truth of what he asserts. Those who are unacquainted with the respectable source from which this information is gained, may be led to doubt its correctness. Where the character of Richard M'Neman is known, the utmost reliance is placed on his word. Besides, his account agrees with what was communicated to the public in the periodical journals of that day. This greatest of all revivals arose from small beginnings, and gradually progressed until it spread over a great part of Kentucky and the adjoining States. The country being newly settled, the people must have come from a vast distance to swell the assembly to four, five, ten and even twenty thousand. Children of eight months of age, were the subjects of this work. And the exhortations delivered by boys and girls afforded convincing proof to thousands, that the living God was speaking through them to their consciences. There were no formal regulations as to preaching, praying or singing. Both old and young, male and female, black and white, all improved their gifts as they were moved upon by the Spirit. And if there was one soul in an assembly of several thousand that was not actively engaged in some mode of exercise, such a one was looked upon as a dead weight.

This work was opposed by the professed Deist, and the formal Christian, but when characters of this description assembled with the multitude, they uniformly went with the current. However bent they might be on opposing the work, the spirit that pervaded the assembly, penetrated their hearts, and they were irresistibly constrained to unite in the work they came to oppose. If any attempted to flee as from an enemy, though their efforts should be ever so violent, the spirit would arrest them in their flight, and they would fall prostrate to the earth. Both old and young, black and white, all were operated upon in a similar manner. Many lay apparently dead for several days. There were no signs or appearance of life. The animal functions were entirely suspended; and, strange as it may appear, they gaped and expired in a cold sweat. One author observes, that there were three thousand in this condition, at one meeting; and to prevent their being trod upon *by the multitude*, these bodies were collected together, that they might be in a place of security. When they came out of these trances, they testified that their immortal part ranged the "fields of the invisible world," and they generally delivered a pathetic exhortation or prophecy. They declared that the day of full redemption was near at hand. The spirit of this revival pointed directly to this important event. In the height of their ecstasy, they were constrained to worship God in the dance.

This was not voluntary. They were irresistibly compelled to go forth in the dances by some invisible hand! Many attempted to resist the impulse until they were forced to comply, by other involuntary acts still more mortifying. The only way that they could avoid the latter, was by yielding to the former. They soon considered it their privilege to rejoice before the Lord, and go "forth in the dances of them that make merry." When I describe to you these mortifying exercises, you will not think strange, that to avoid them, they cheerfully went forth in

the dance before the Lord. The spirit of the revival led them to express their joy and gladness in this way. This, you may perceive, was a prelude to the gospel order that was soon to succeed. My object is to show, that this was a work of preparation, as the event has absolutely proved to a demonstration.

I wish now to show you the exercises of an involuntary kind, to which these people were subjected, that appear to have been substituted in room of the "*falling exercise*," as it was called, at which I have just hinted. The principal of these were the *rolling exercise*, the *jerks*, and the *barks*.

The *rolling exercise* consisted in being cast down in a violent manner, doubled with the head and feet together, and rolled over and over, like a wheel, or stretched, in a prostrate manner, turned swiftly over and over like a log. This was considered very debasing and mortifying, especially if the person was taken in this manner, through the mud, and sullied from head to foot.

Still more demoralizing were the *jerks*. Nothing in nature could better represent this strange and unaccountable operation, than for one to goad another, alternately on every side, with a spear of red hot iron. The exercise commonly began in the head, which would fly backward and forward, and from side to side, with a quick jolt, which the person would naturally labor to suppress, but in vain; and the more any one labored to stay himself, and be sober, the more he staggered, and the more rapidly his twitches increased. He must, necessarily go as he was stimulated, whether with a violent dash on the ground, or bounce from place to place, like a foot ball; or hop round with head, limbs and trunk, twitching and jolting in every direction, as if they must inevitably fly asunder. And how such could escape without injury, was no small wonder to spectators. By this strange operation, the human frame was commonly so transformed and disfigured, as to lose every trace of its natural appearance.

Sometimes the head would be twisted to the right and left, to a half round, with such velocity that not a feature could be discovered, but the face appear as much behind, as before. And in the quick, progressive jerk, it would seem as if the person was transmuted into some other species of creature. Head dresses were of little account among the female jerkers. Even handkerchiefs, bound tight round the head, would be flung off almost with the first twitch, and the hair put into the utmost confusion. This was a great inconvenience, to redress which, the generality were shorn, though directly contrary to their confession of faith. Such as were seized with the jerks, were wrested at once, not only from under their own government, but that of every one else, so that it was dangerous to attempt confining them, or touching them in any manner, to whatever danger they were exposed; yet few were hurt except it were such as rebelled against the operation, through wilful and deliberate enmity, and refused to comply with the injunctions, which it came to enforce.

The last possible grade of mortification seemed couched in the *barks*! These frequently accompanied the jerks; nor were they the most mean and contemptible characters, who were the common victims of this disgracing operation; but persons who considered themselves in the foremost rank, possessed of the highest improvements of human nature; and yet in spite of all the efforts of nature, both men and women would

be forced to personate that animal, whose name, appropriated to a human creature, is counted the most vulgar stigma—forced, I say ; for no argument but force, could induce any one of polite breeding, in a public company, to take the position of a canine animal, move about on all fours, growl, snap the teeth, and bark, in so personating a manner, as to set the eyes and ears of the spectator, at variance.

It was commonly acknowledged by the subjects of these exercises, that they were laid upon them as a chastisement for disobedience, or a stimulus to incite them to some duty or exercise to which they felt opposed. Hence it was perceivable, that the quickest method to find releasement from the jerks and barks, was to engage in the voluntary dance. And such as refused, when this duty and privilege were made known, had to bear these afflicting operations, from month to month, and from year to year, until they wholly lost their original design, and were converted into a badge of honor. Although these strange convulsions served to overawe the heaven-daring spirits of the wicked, and stimulate the halting, to the performance of many duties, disagreeable to the carnal mind ; yet in all this, their design was not fully comprehended ; something doubtful, and awful was thought to be prefigured, which would suddenly fall with pain upon the head of the wicked ; and nothing was more calculated to excite such fearful apprehensions, than the expressions that were sometimes mixed with the *bow, wow wow*, such as “ every knee shall *bow*, and every tongue confess.” “ At least, these kind of exercises served to show, that the foundation was not yet laid, for unremitting joy, and that such as attached themselves to this people, must unite with them as a *body*, destined to suffer with Christ before they could reign with him. But however great their sufferings from a sense of their own remaining depravity—the burden and weight they bore for a lost world—the hatred, contempt, and persecuting rage of all around them—together with the spasmodic writhings with which they were so generally exercised ; yet they were not a little alleviated by the many extraordinary signs and gifts of the Spirit, through which they were encouraged to look for brighter days.”

Many predicted that 1805 would be to them a memorable epoch. Their whole topic was the increasing work of God, and each one contemplated it through some special vision, in which they professed to be carried clear out of the body, and to have an interview with their departed friends, and to see the different allotments in the invisible world. They saw the New Jerusalem and the way opened into the Holy City. So sure were they, that in 1805, there would be a wonderful manifestation, that the infinite glories of Mount Zion would then break open upon them, that they solemnly pledged themselves to each other, by shaking hands, that they would persevere in the sin-killing work, until the day of full redemption arrived.

About the latter part of 1804, they met together in one vast assembly, and offered up each their separate cries to God, in one united harmony of sound. One desire, sentiment and feeling pervaded the whole. This was in truth a work of preparation on a large scale, and we shall soon see that, that which succeeded, corresponded in this respect with what went before. These people were not deceived in their expectations. Their prayers and their hopes were about to be realized. The rays emitted by the star in the east, were soon to commingle with those of the west. About the same time, this united prayer was put up by the

subjects of the revival. The church at New-Lebanon despatched John Mencham, Benjamin S. Youngs and Issachar Bates, on a mission to the western States, with the testimony of Jesus Christ. They arrived in Kentucky about the first of March, and were cordially received by many of the subjects of the revival. These were very plain men, in their dress and manners; but when they opened the testimony, it was accompanied with the energy of divine power, and set home to the consciences and understandings of the people. Many of the first characters, including some of the principal leaders in the revival, embraced the testimony. It was a trying time. They plainly saw that they must either come into that heavenly order, for which they had so fervently prayed, or pursue a course directly opposed to the dictates of that mysterious light by which they had been led and governed through the whole excitement.

What but the spirit of the living God could have brought about such a remarkable coincidence! What but a supernatural operation could have induced the church at New Lebanon, just at that crisis, to send three messengers on a pedestrian tour to such a vast distance! The whole circumstances connected, prove to a demonstration, that the Spirit of God was the efficient cause of the whole! This conclusion is not the result of a distempered brain or a phrenzied imagination. It is a sober reality, that bids defiance to successful contradiction. Think of it as you will, the time has come when believers in this testimony can speak with confidence and assurance. Their faith and order have been tested, and there remains not the shadow of a doubt, that they are a people owned and blessed of Heaven.

In the course of a short time from the opening of the testimony by these three messengers of the gospel, there were five societies formed in the western States, viz. two in Kentucky; one at Pleasant Hill, in Mercer county, containing about 500 members; the other at South-Union, Jasper Springs, in Logan county, containing about 400 members. One in Indiana, Knox county, on Busseron Creek, containing about 200 members. There are two societies in the State of Ohio; one at Union Village, in the county of Warren, containing about 600 members, and one at Waterliet, on Beaver Creek, containing about 100 members. There probably have been large additions since the period of which we are speaking. I do not mention this from the impulse of vanity, but merely to show you the remarkable success attendant on the labors of three individuals, in a distant country; far from home and friends dearer than life. They surely needed a hand more than mortal, to sustain them in so arduous an undertaking. And it may be said in truth, that the divine agency was conspicuously manifested in the whole, from beginning to end.

These three brethren were in the vigor of life, when they left New Lebanon, and after having stayed upwards of thirty years in the western country, and joyfully witnessed the fruits of their labors in the establishment of these flourishing families, they returned to spend the evening of their lives in the bosom of the Mother Church, from whose embraces, they were impelled by a sense of duty to depart. They honored God in obeying his command, as manifested through the visible head of his church. God protected them on the most trying occasions, and enabled them to discharge the responsible duties connected with their high and holy calling, with ability and fidelity. And scores and hundreds who

are now richly participating in the joys of the New Jerusalem, basking in the sun-shine of heavenly peace on the banks of full redemption, and receiving the gentle breezes that softly blow through the spicy groves of the Paradise of God, are humbly beseeching the Majesty of Heaven to prolong lives so useful and so precious.

Venerable Patriarchs ! You have faithfully acquitted yourselves of the duties assigned you. Welcome to that rest which "*tired nature*" solicits. None are more worthy to solace themselves in pleasures so refined, in joys so replete ! Condescend to receive this deserved tribute from one, who may never see you whilst clothed with mortality, but who duly appreciates the indescribable blessings resulting from such disinterestedness, such perseverance and fidelity. The scholar and philosopher may expatiate on the laurels achieved on the fields of *Marathon* and *Pharsalia*. The real believer will look upon yours as far more illustrious and honorable. May the close of life be as peaceful as its meridian has been useful ; and when you pass off the stage of honorable action, and are gathered to the fathers who have gone before you ; thousands will unite in saying, "precious is the balm of your consolation and sweet the odour of your memory."

Now I ask you whether the claims of the *United Society* to a divine and heavenly origin, are not superior to all others ? Where among all the different sects do you discover proofs like these, to sustain their pretensions in this respect ? Be sure to decide according to the balance of evidence presented, and then your decision will be correct. Did I not think that what has been exhibited is every way sufficient to satisfy a reasonable mind, I would pursue this subject still farther. There is an inexhaustible store to which I can resort, and be supplied with evidences in a continued succession, to establish the point under discussion, viz. That this Society is founded on the rock of ages ; that it originated with God ; that it is guarded by his special providence, and never will be overturned. These proofs are well understood by those who are in the light of this dispensation ; so that when once the mind is grounded and firmly established in its truths, like the city, of which it is an inhabitant, *it cannot be moved*.

B. I have listened with increased pleasure to what you have said. I thank you for your condescension in presenting such a variety of interesting circumstances ; all which appear to establish your claim, of being the order predicted of ; that should be established in the latter day. I feel an inclination to be one of your number ; but when I consider the sacrifice I must make, I find my resolutions too feeble to sustain the shock. I am so well satisfied with what I have heard, and take so deep an interest in your principles, that I feel to renew the request of the privilege of listening to you longer on the subject of the present investigation.

M. It is no less a privilege to me than to you. To the real philanthropist, there is as much pleasure in imparting as in receiving instruction. Those who have received help ought to be willing to help others. I have always found believers ready to impart information to those who have the candor to receive it. What remains to be communicated, must necessarily be deferred to another interview. In the mean time I wish you to be assured of my sincere love and friendship.

DIALOGUE XII.

B. I have been recently informed, that the United Society deny the resurrection, and reject the ordinances. St. Paul, in the 15th of 1st Corinthians, attached great importance to this doctrine; and it is equally evident that the apostles baptized and administered the sacrament. I cannot see the propriety of rejecting such important principles so clearly revealed in the scriptures. You will do me a favor to present the views of the *United Society* upon them.

M. You have truly laid out a large field of labor. It will be difficult for me to illustrate every particular connected with the subjects you have presented for consideration. Indeed, your native genius supersedes the necessity of this. I shall take up the subject in the order in which you have presented it.

In the first place, you greatly err in supposing that the United Society deny the resurrection. They attach as much importance to the resurrection as Paul did. If, by the resurrection, you mean to convey the idea of the reanimation of the natural body, we deny it, and call upon you to present your proofs to sustain it.

B. There is proof to the point in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the tomb of Joseph.

M. But where do you get your proof to the point? I will allow that when the *two women* went to the tomb, while it was yet dark, Jesus was not there, and they run and told the disciples that he had risen from the dead.

B. They were told so by the angel, who sat upon a stone by the tomb, and that he had gone into Gallilee. This was told to the disciples by the *women*.

M. Indeed, according to this, the resurrection of the body depends on what an angel *told two women* to tell the disciples; and the disciples told it to the world! I came nigh stumbling upon the rock of Deism here. I had no idea of any other resurrection, but that of the body. To deny this, I conceived to be paramount to a denial of a future existence. A certain eminent writer, whose name I shall not mention, was my oracle. He predicated all his hopes of immortality on the resurrection of the body of Jesus. As this was the only hope of the Christian, according to this writer, I was led to examine the scripture proof as to this point. By an examination of the four Evangelists, I found, to my inexpressible chagrine and disappointment, that the evidences were far from satisfactory. Even the women, upon whose testimony the believers, in a literal resurrection depend, did not pretend to see him rise. In the fear of God, I state it—neither of the four, who recorded the particulars relating to the tragical death of the *Prince of Life*, has presented evidence, satisfactory to my mind, of the resurrection of the natural body of Jesus! Now I ask you, friend, to examine the four gospels as they are called, in reference to this important point. In such a case, I do not hesitate to say, you must unavoidably come to the same conclusion.

This is not denying the substance of the resurrection. The natural

man can have no idea of any resurrection but that of the body. In their imagination, they apply to the Almighty, the bodily organs peculiar to human nature. And they have no idea that there can be the perfection of bliss without them ! He discerneth not the things of the Spirit, neither can he know them. It is difficult, if not impossible, to explain this subject to the understanding of such. A literal resurrection is so grounded and riveted in the minds of professed Christians, that it is with extreme reluctance that they listen, for a moment, to any arguments, however conclusive against it.

B. You request me to examine the four gospels relating to the resurrection of Christ's body. This I have done long since ; but to my apprehension, the evidence was far from being sufficient, to establish an idea of such vast magnitude as many suppose this to be.

It is in vain for me, or any one else, to argue a literal resurrection, from any proof presented there to sustain it. To establish the belief in the resurrection of the body, one must resort to other evidences, which appear in the minds of many, to establish its truth beyond a doubt. You cannot deny but what the disciples believed that the body of Jesus was reanimated, as it was made evident to their senses on a variety of occasions.

M. I do not dispute but what this was the case ; but you should understand that it was a long time after the crucifixion of Christ, before they understood the true meaning and substance of the resurrection. They even believed their Master would soon return and reign as a literal sovereign. I suppose I know what you mean by the resurrection of the body of Christ being made evident to their senses. They were so situated, that an appeal to their *senses* was the only method by which they could be led to a knowledge of the true resurrection. There is no dispute but what the divine Power could assume any form which circumstances required ; so that we read that Christ appeared to the disciples at the sea-side, but they did not know his person, though they were convinced by the *power* he displayed at that time. When the two were travelling to Emmaus, they did not mistrust for a long time, that the stranger with them was Christ himself ! When he opened their understanding to a knowledge of the scriptures, they were convinced that he spake with divine authority and power ; and it was this, more than any personal resemblance, that convinced them that he was Christ.

When the disciples assembled in a room, the doors being shut for fear of the Jews, Christ appeared in the midst, and demonstrated the truth of his resurrection to the sense of seeing and feeling and hearing. But as the common avenue of entrance was shut, it could not be the material body of Christ, although it had that appearance to the apprehension of those who were present. It is true, Christ said, "a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." One caught him by the feet, and another thrust his hand into his side ;* but this seemed absolutely necessary on this occasion, that they might be made sensible by the touch, that their divine Lord was not holden by the bands of death. They had previously heard the testimony of Mary and others ; but Thomas in particular,

*We find no positive proof in the scripture that *Thomas did thrust his hand into his side*, notwithstanding he was invited so to do.—See *Dun-*
 . . . 357.

could not be convinced that Christ had risen indeed, without this convincing proof. It is well to understand that a disciple, in the original, signifies a learner; and at this time they had hardly passed the threshold of the temple of knowledge. They were not, as yet, "endued with power from on high," and consequently the Saviour conformed himself to their condition by *assuming* a bodily shape and substance. His showing his disciples his hands and his feet and his wounded side, his eating before them, and speaking to them as he did, tended to calm their fears and render them conversable. In short, it was necessary that a natural resurrection should be presented to their minds, as a figure of that which is spiritual, before they could come to a correct knowledge of that which could be revealed only by the Spirit.

There is no more reason to suppose, because he appeared to them in this manner, that it was the material body of Christ, than because he appeared to John as a Lamb with seven heads and seven eyes, that he was in reality such an animal. Why should not Christ, according to the common opinion, still retain the marks of Jewish barbarity? Why should not the martyrs, who have fallen victims of anti-christian tyranny, exhibit the same deformity now, that they had when they left this world?

Our bodies are composed of the same material elements with the lower order of animals; and in this respect we are inferior to many species of the brutal creation. In point of strength, who can vie with the elephant or the rhinoceros? The body is continually nourished by the elements, and the substance that composes it, passes off in a few years, and is replaced by another of the same nature. This mass, reanimated, must make a huge monster, indeed! This, you may say, is trifling with so solemn a subject. I do not wish to treat the religious opinions of any with levity; but the resurrection of the body involves the above absurdity.

It may be argued, that our natural bodies become transformed into spiritual; but the transformation of matter into spirit, is one of the greatest absurdities ever offered to a rational being. In all the records of heathen mythology, you cannot find its equal. And yet this is the only ground on which is argued the hypothesis of a literal resurrection, with the least colour of propriety! I was walking with an eminent clergyman, by an ancient burying ground in Boston; we turned aside, and passed among the mouldering remains of the *Pilgrim Fathers*. The *Hic jacit* of many, purported that they had laid there nearly two hundred years. It requires a faith, said he, stronger than mine, to believe that these bodies will ever rise. I was astonished that he should express doubts in relation to what, both he and I contended, was the only ground of hope of a future existence beyond the grave!

It is believed by most of those who hold to a literal resurrection, that the spirit, at death, receives its destiny, and is consigned either to heaven or hell; that its happiness or misery cannot be complete, until it resumes the body; that at a period called the resurrection, both soul and body will be reunited, and arraigned before the judgment seat of Christ! The only reason assigned for this parade, is, that it might *appear* that God is just in assigning to the righteous and wicked, their respective portions in two distinct *places*, called heaven and hell!! Without all this, the wicked could not be completely miserable, nor the righteous perfectly happy!! If this is not a fair representation of the sentiments of most of the advocates of a literal resurrection, I know not how to adapt words to express their views.

Where is the person so presumptuous, as to call in question, sentiments so rational, so scriptural! A learned priesthood, with a string of titles like the tail of a flying comet, have concentrated all their powers, and with immense labor, and the most profound study, have brought out to the gaze of an astonished world, this luminous theory! Is all this to be set aside as useless trash? Such is the stand taken by the advocates of the resurrection of the body, and of a future judgment. To deny these, in their estimation, is paramount to a denial of the foundation principles of Christianity. Errors of long standing become sacred by age; and he who attempts to strip them of their false colourings, and expose their nakedness, generally incurs the censure of those who are more interested in perpetuating falsehood, than in building up the cause of truth and righteousness!

Nothing shall deter me from exposing the fallacy of the arguments by which the above notions have been sustained. I oppose them, length and breadth. There is not a passage in the scriptures, when correctly explained and understood, to support a belief in the reanimation of the body; and both scripture and reason are directly opposed to the prevailing notion, that the soul cannot be completely happy in a future state, until it is reunited to the body.

The body, in the scriptures, is called the *tabernacle*; and there is no evidence that the elements that compose it, will ever be reorganized; and experience demonstrates that there is no necessity of it—"For *we* that are in this tabernacle, do groan, being burdened"—"For *we know* that if our house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." The house not made with hands, is not particularly defined; but there is not the most distant hint, that the elements composing the earthly house, will ever be reanimated; and both reason and experience confirm the fact, that the body is an incumbrance to the spirit—a "clog to the soul."

The process of a future judgment, as advocated by modern *divines*, caps the climax of inconsistency. They appear to have no conception of a progressive judgment. Not having travelled in spirit, they confine their views to the letter of scripture, and therefore consider "the judgment of the great day," as having reference to a particular day, "for which all other days were made;" when Christ will sit as a formal judge, and decide the eternal destiny of all mankind! This has been the theme of many an eloquent harrangue. Both the poet and the orator are indebted to it for some of the finest figures of speech, with which to please the fancy of the vain and unenlightened. People of sound judgment and deep penetration, have found but little instruction, or even edification, by ever so attentive a perusal of the ablest productions of modern writers on the subject of the resurrection and future judgment.

B. There appears to be positive proof of the resurrection of the body in Matth. 27: 52, 53. "And the graves were opened; and many *bodies* of the saints which slept, arose, and came out of the graves, after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."

M. Many have erroneously blended this circumstance with those which occurred at the crucifixion; but it appears that the whole transpired "*after his resurrection.*" It may be argued that this does not alter the principles of the fact. Very true; but admitting the graves literally opened, is it not strange that but one of the evangelists noticed it? The

rest are entirely silent about the graves opening, and the bodies of the saints arising. Should Jerusalem be meant by the "*holy city*," into which these saints went, as it is generally thought, it is very strange indeed, that we have no other account of such a remarkable event. Nobody affirms that they saw these graves open, and the bodies of these saints arise! We are told by somebody that this was the case, and that these saints went to the holy city, and appeared unto *many*! I should be glad to inquire of those who hold this to be a literal fact, what probably became of them afterwards? Whether they went back into the graves from whence they came, or took up their residence in the neighborhood where they died? Whether they appeared in a winding sheet, or resumed their former costume? Probably there must have been a transfer of property, and important changes in other respects; were these made null and void by their re-appearance? And last of all, did they have to experience the agonies of death the second time? There must be a rational answer to these questions, before I can believe that this was literally true.

The only rational construction that can possibly be given to the passage you have selected, is, that it had a figurative allusion to the revival of the hopes of Christ's followers after the resurrection. The words "*graves*," and "*sleep*," are both used in the Old and New Testament, in a similar sense. The prophet Daniel says, that "*many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting shame and contempt*"—"Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." One of the prophets represents the return of the Jews from their captivity, by the figure of "*coming out of their graves*." The passage under consideration, contains no stronger expressions, than the ones last quoted; and I see no more propriety in understanding the former in a literal sense, than the latter.

B. There is another passage in the book of Job, which I look upon as one of the strongest evidences in support of the resurrection of the body—Job 19: 26. "And though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God."*

M. I should say, that this passage proves directly the reverse of what you intend. Would you or any one else, attempt to argue that Job hoped to see God in *his flesh* in a future state? He had confidence in God in his trouble, and indulged the hope that God would appear on the earth as his deliverer, and that he should see him while in the flesh. It appears that in the sequel, the Almighty did appear as his redeemer. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, (said he,) *but now mine eyes see thee*." It appears that Job lived a long while after this, and ended his days in peace and prosperity.

Believers are represented as being risen with Christ, by the apostle, in Col. 3: 1—3. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God—For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." It is not necessary to prove to you, that to be risen with Christ, is the same as being regenerated; or, as Paul expresses it in another place, "putting off the old

*The marginal translation reads thus: "After I shall awake, though this body be destroyed, yet *out of my flesh* shall I see God." See also Dunlavy's Manifesto on this passage—pp. 372, 373.

man with his deeds, or putting on the new ;" or as Christ himself says, "And are the children of God, being the children of the *resurrection*." Christ again says, "I am the resurrection and the life." It is evident, therefore, that whoever is in Christ, is in the resurrection. And again, says Paul, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature"—"Old things are done away, and behold all things are become new." Those who in fact were in Christ, meet with no difficulty in understanding the real substance of the resurrection; for such are made partakers of it. But whilst pretended Christians are bending under an intolerable burden of old trash that should be cast away as dross, they never can understand the true nature of the resurrection.

St. Paul, in his speech before Agrippa, says, among other things, that he "witnessed both to small and great, and said none other things than those which Moses and the prophets did say should come, that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the *first that should rise from the dead*, and should show light to the Gentiles and to the people."

A literal resurrection could not be meant here, for how could Christ be the *first* that literally arose from the dead? There had been several instances of the dead being raised to life previous to the resurrection of Christ. If we even admit that Christ's body arose from the tomb—the resurrection of Lazarus was prior to it, and much more extraordinary, for the latter had been dead four days! The resurrection of Christ had nothing to do with the elements of that body which he received from his Mother. In short, Christ rose out of that fallen nature, which pertained to the earth, and ascended above all earthly principalities and powers, and every thing that can be named of an earthly or gross nature. In this important respect, he was truly the first that arose from the dead. And here he stands as a light to direct the lost sons and daughters of Adam, to the haven of everlasting repose. The true resurrection consists in leaving the first Adam with *all* his works, and coming into the order of the second Adam; the Lord from heaven. And whoever travails with Christ in the regeneration, and overcomes the elements of the world—"The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life," as he did, are raised up and made to set together in heavenly places, with Christ Jesus; or in other words, they sit down with Christ upon his throne. This is an elevation to which all should aspire. It is gained only by a life of self-denial and the cross.

Christ said to Nicodemus, "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man who is in heaven." No one will argue that the body of Jesus came down from heaven; neither according to this testimony, could it be *that* which ascended up to heaven. "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit, is spirit." And St. Paul says that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven; and as no one will pretend but what the body of Christ was composed of flesh and blood, it could not be this that ascended to heaven.

In the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians, Paul treats largely on the subject of the resurrection. In verse 35th, he institutes an inquiry, "but some men will say, how are the dead raised; and with what body do they come?" We may reasonably expect an answer directly to the point. If the resurrection of the material body had been a sentiment of Paul, he surely would have exhibited it here; but hear his answer, "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die.

And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bear grain ; it may chance of wheat or of some other grain—But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed *his* own body." If the material body be meant by the figure of wheat that is sowed, I know not how there can be a stronger proof to sustain my argument, that it is not this material body that is the subject of the resurrection. "Thou sowest *not* that body that shall be." Had Paul said, thou sowest that body that shall be, the case would be essentially altered ; but the little word *not*, effectually overturns the belief in a literal resurrection. The substance of the resurrection is called a body. But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed *his* own body, not *its* own body.

But a few believe, and these the most ignorant, that the Almighty possesses the organs peculiar to man. They consequently cannot be essential to his happiness, neither are they essential to the happiness of man in a future world. That which constitutes immortality is given to man by him alone, who has it. The substance received is according to the pleasure of God.

It seems to have been a sentiment of Paul, that order characterized the heavenly world. "For one star differeth from another star in glory." The sun, moon and stars are figurative representations of the different degrees of glory, to which in the order of the new creation, mankind attain. It has been shown before, that the order of the *United Society* is an emblem of that of the invisible world ; and those who come into this order and faithfully persevere to the end, will be ranked among the first fruits pertaining to the general harvest of mankind. They are said to be kings, and priests unto God, *and reign upon the earth !*

He who has a right understanding of this subject, will be led duly to appreciate the indescribable greatness of this privilege, and the inconceivable loss such sustain who forfeit these advantages, by giving way to the alluring vanities of this inconstant world ! Had it not been for this, many, very many might have shone as stars of the first magnitude in the christian firmament. But alas ! they lost their day and must of necessity reap the bitter fruits of their folly. "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars ; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption." Believers in a literal resurrection suppose that "*it*" refers to the dead body sown in the earth, and consequently draw the inference that the same body is raised in incorruption. A little more reflection, I should suppose, would convince any one of the impropriety of such a conclusion.

Paul endeavors to show in the first part of this chapter, a future existence, and to controvert the then prevailing doctrine of the Sadducees ; which was that there was no future existence—and in order to exhibit this more clearly, we will advert to the 19th verse : "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most miserable." Why the most miserable ? If it is true, as believers in a literal resurrection profess to believe, that the souls of the righteous ascend to bliss, is not the soul of the righteous in a better situation than the soul of the wicked ? Admitting that the animal body is never raised to be united with it, this makes it evident that a future state was the subject here to be proved. This is made further manifest by what is contained in the 32d verse—"If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what

advantageth it me if the dead rise not ? Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die"—which is tantamount to saying, this is the end of us. But notwithstanding his object evidently was to prove there was a future existence ; still he maintained that there was also a resurrection of the dead ; and in order to show what this resurrection was, he immediately refers to the order of the two Adams, verse 45, which by reference to the Greek Testament reads—"The first man Adam was made *into* a living soul, the last Adam was made *into* a living Spirit."

Here he exhibits the two orders and proceeds, "The first man is of the earth earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven." He then proceeds to show that the resurrection consists in being raised out of the earthly state or order into the heavenly. He plainly shows that the glory of the terrestrial is one, and the glory of the celestial is another. The first is sown (Greek, disseminated) in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. Paul here has no allusion to the fall of Adam ; but contrasts the two orders, natural and spiritual, as exhibited in their respective heads ; as the natural was subject to mortality and corruption, the resurrection consisted in being raised to that state in which there was no mortality nor corruption. Therefore he says, "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." Then to show that they had not attained to that state of incorruption, (Paul with the rest) he says verse 51, "Behold I show you a mystery, we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed ; For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." Here is shown that the attainment gained in Paul's time (he with the rest) was not any higher than the order of that day ; but they looked forward, or anticipated another day, when the seventh or last trumpet should sound, and the mystery of God be finished ; when they should be raised or elevated into the full light of Christ's second appearing. This brings the soul into a state of incorruption or immortality, into the state of which Christ testified, viz. "Neither can they die any more, for they are equal unto the Angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection."

Let me invite your attention to this subject still further. As much is built upon the words, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump," &c. it will be proper to consider that the day in which Paul lived, was only in part, as he himself testifies, and consequently he could not carry or instruct them any farther than the light and dispensation of that day ; yet many attained to that degree, that they did not fall asleep, but remained in anticipation or in expectation of a change from that dispensation into the fulness of that which was to be revealed by the sounding of the seventh or last trumpet, which finished the mystery of God. It may be properly inferred that although the trumpet was emphatically for the purpose of awakening the dead ; yet those that remained alive were instantaneously changed into the order of the new dispensation ; and to demonstrate the matter more clearly, that this has no allusion to the natural body it is evident, that not even Paul remained alive as to his animal existence, when the trumpet should sound.

It is further evident that the body of Christ, or the Church of that day could be corrupted, and was considered a corruptible body, from the apostacy which then and afterwards took place in it, and this constituted the mortal body or Church which Paul declared must put on immortality—which was to be the case when the Church should rise and be establish-

ed in its full order and glory, and then it put on incorruption and immortality. "The soul that sinneth it shall die," and when the soul shall rise to this state of incorruption and immortality, then is brought to pass the saying that is written—"Death is swallowed up in victory; O death where is thy sting! O grave where is thy victory! The sting of death is sin, and to rise out of sin is to rise from the dead."

The foundation of the egregious error that pervades christendom in relation to the true substance of the resurrection, is the imperfect view formed of the first and second Adam, and the works appropriate to each. "The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven." The works of the first are sensual and earthy, and the works of the second are spiritual and heavenly; and those who come into the order of the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, must necessarily leave the order and works of the first. Such "are the children of God, being the *children of the resurrection*." "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy, and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." The earthy are such as follow the order of the first Adam in the work of generation. The heavenly are those who follow Christ, the second Adam, in the work of regeneration.

In order to understand experimentally the true scriptural doctrine of the resurrection, we must follow Christ by a strict imitation of the examples he has set, and inasmuch as we are raised above the world by crucifying that which is contrary to the purity of Christ and his gospel; we shall be led to know "the power of his resurrection." You perceive by this that the resurrection is not instantaneous, but a progressive work, for we are made alive in the second Adam only as we die in the first. And we cannot be made partakers of the resurrection in all its fulness, until we become dead to the rudiments of the world, by a life of self-denial and the cross.

B. I have listened to your remarks with pleasure, and sincerely hope that God will enable me to come into the order of the new creation, that I may experience the joys which I am confident can be obtained from no other source.

M. There are many passages relating to the subject of the resurrection which I might have noticed, but those which have been explained, are far from supporting the belief in a literal resurrection. Those which I have not noticed are equally favorable to the views of the *United Society*. I hope shortly to have the privilege of giving you our views of the two remaining questions you proposed. If you resolve to come into the order of the new creation, God himself has declared that his grace shall be equal to your day. Farewell.

DIALOGUE XIII.

M. We are accused of rejecting baptism and the sacrament of the Lord's supper. If by baptism you mean water baptism, the charge is true. We leave it with the rest of the Jewish ordinances, not viewing it as belonging to the gospel, and consequently not essential to salvation.

B. We certainly read of its being practiced by the apostles on a number of occasions. Phillip baptized the Eunuch. That it was water bap-

tism is evident, for they went down into the water and came up out of the water. Paul baptized Crispus and Gaius, and the household of Stephanes. And we read that there were three thousand baptized in one day, who were converted through the instrumentality of Peter's preaching.

M. It is readily granted that some of the apostles baptized with water. It can also be proved that they circumcised—Paul in a particular manner circumcised Timothy. Is this an evidence that circumcision belongs to the gospel? Neither baptism nor circumcision was practiced by the apostles under the impression, that they acted by divine authority. This is evident from what Paul says himself, "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius," and immediately adds, "I was not sent to baptize, but to preach the gospel." Had the apostle viewed water baptism as a divine requirement under the gospel, would he have thanked God that he had conformed to it only in one solitary instance? Besides, it is as evident that he was not sent to baptize, as it is that he was sent to preach the gospel. Had it been a divine ordinance, I see no reason why it should not have been committed to him. More especially as many view it as a door of entrance into the church, and absolutely essential to salvation.

B. Does not Christ say, "He that believeth and is *baptized*, shall be saved?" And did he not, on another occasion, command his disciples to teach "all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost"?

M. But if you suppose that water baptism is meant here, you labor under a gross mistake. The baptism in both of the above passages, is the baptism of the Spirit. The correct translation of the latter is, (*eis to anoma*) into the name. Water has nothing to do with it. The baptism of John only prefigured the baptism of the Spirit. John came preaching in the wilderness, and baptized with water, as a legal ceremony. Christ himself went out to be baptized of John; but John declared that he had need to be baptized of him; but Jesus said, "Suffer it to be so *now*, for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." John had sufficient discernment to know that he stood in need of Christ's baptism, which was essentially different from his. The one was the shadow, the other the substance. Christ was baptized, not as an example to those who should come into the light of the gospel dispensation, but to fulfill all righteousness under the law. This is evident from the declaration of John—"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me, is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."

Here we are expressly told what Christ's baptism should be. John's affected the body, but Christ's reached the soul. The one was external, and even as such, could not "*put away the filth of the flesh*." The other was internal, and tended to consume every thing that was opposed to God.

Those who are in the wilderness with John, are very tenacious for water baptism; and if it does them any good, I am willing they should have it. As to the mode of baptism, let those contend about it, who have only travailed to the *shadow* of the substance. They are like blind men contending about colours. After all their contention, black is black, and white is white. Not a single ray of light, or particle of benefit, ever accrued from all this altercation. The Christian world has been in a continued uproar, contending about shadows, whilst the real substance has been disregarded and neglected.

There is really some excuse for those who make no pretensions of knowing any thing about the baptism of the Holy Ghost, if they do dispute about the particular mode of water baptism. What is it to the really enlightened, whether sprinkling or immersion be the true mode? Those who have advanced no farther in the heavenly life than this shadow, whether they have been sprinkled or immersed, remain the same. They are the same before as after, and after as before. Of what consequence is it, which is the successful competitor, whether hog eat dog, or dog eat hog? Those who are baptized into the Spirit of eternal truth, and whose gross propensities have been consumed by the fire of the Holy Ghost, look upon these pueril contentions as a convincing evidence of blindness and ignorance. I know that our Universities and Colleges have appended the initials of Doctor of Divinity to the names of their respective champions; but the most of them know no more about real divinity, than the Bashaw of Tunis, or the Grand Seignior at Constantinople.

There are many who profess to be baptized by the Holy Ghost, and yet consider water baptism essential to the Christian character. To such, the substance is lost in the shadow; but to those who are in reality baptized into the Spirit, the shadow is lost in the substance. The baptism of water can be of no possible use to those who correctly understand the substance; nor will they, if they act consistently, resort to the use of the figure, thinking to be improved by it. Such a ridiculous course will admit of no apology, and yet there are numerous instances of high professions of being made perfectly free by the power of gospel truth; but before persons of this description can be admitted to the communion of certain orders, they must return to the wilderness of John's baptism. Having received the substance, and exulted in the freedom of the sons of God, to consummate their bliss, they are instructed to turn their eyes from the brilliant prospect before them, and feast their souls upon the shadow which should be left in the rear!

I know of no instance of Christ's requiring his disciples to be baptized with water; nor is it reasonable to conclude he would authorize his apostles to baptize with John's baptism instead of his own. "Ye shall drink of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with." This could not mean water baptism, for they had already been baptized with that. Again, said he, "John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." Here is made an express distinction between Christ's baptism and that of John. In short, all who contend for water baptism as an institution of God, and binding upon mankind, are John's disciples, and consequently are far in the rear of the light of this dispensation. St. Paul says that there is "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism." If there is but *one* baptism, it is rendered certain there cannot be *two*. Which is it? water baptism, or the baptism of the Spirit? Paul has answered this question, and let his words stand—"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free, and have all been made to drink into one Spirit"—"Now the Lord is that Spirit." Would you or any other reasonable man, presume to say, with this evidence before your eyes, that water baptism is the "one baptism?" If there is one subject on the records of inspiration, demonstrated with perfect clearness, it is that of baptism. There need not be the least doubt, but that water bap-

tism is as much excluded from the gospel as being essential, as circumcision and other Jewish ceremonies.

The circumstance of Jesus receiving water baptism from John, is no evidence of its being a gospel ordinance. Why may it not be argued, on the same principle, that Christians should be circumcised? It can easily be proved, that Christ was circumcised—that he was baptized, and offered sacrifices in conformity to the requirements of the former dispensation; but will any contend that these are binding on Christians now? If so, those who zealously advocate water baptism, are very remiss in the discharge of most of these duties.

I would observe, that if water baptism, or any other religious ceremony, is attended with any benefit in reforming the lives, or in keeping any, who practice them, from immoral habits, I have no objection to their observing them. But it is too often the case, that people resort to water baptism to ease the reproaches of conscience, and gradually leaven back into a lifeless state, and become as loose in their principles and corrupt in their practices as before. There is no doubt, but many have felt a blessing in conforming to what they conceived to be their duty in this respect; but this uniformly applies to those who have been taught by persons to whom they look for religious instruction, that water baptism is a divine requirement; and as such, they view it to be their indispensable duty to observe it.

B. You have presented this subject in an entire new light; and I am astonished that those who make the scriptures their study, should contend for water baptism as a requirement under the gospel. It is certainly plain, that circumcision and other Jewish ceremonies, might be advocated with equal propriety. I believe that no benefit has resulted from the controversies relating to the mode of water baptism. If I am not under a mistake, both *Worcester* and *Baldwin* were honored with the dignified title of D. D. by the respective orders to which they belonged, in consequence of establishing both sprinkling and immersion, as the true mode of baptism. They both were successful, and triumphantly carried off the palm of victory!

M. I surely rejoice that your sentiments on baptism harmonize with mine. I cheerfully exhibit the views of the *United Society* on baptism, to a person of your intelligence and candor, from the persuasion that the arguments will not be lost. I wish you to give this subject a thorough investigation, and I am positive, that by a critical examination of the scriptures, every one *must* come to the conclusion, that water baptism is not required of God under the present dispensation in any manner whatever.

I shall say but little on the third question you proposed. It is generally believed, that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as it is called, was instituted by Christ himself; but this was not the case. The occasion which gave rise to the Christian sacrament, was the Jewish pass-over, on the celebration of which, the Saviour officiated in a manner similar to the head of a Jewish family. This passover was established in commemoration of the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage; but Christ commanded his disciples to observe it in remembrance of him. He did not establish any particular time for the observance of this, but "as often as ye do it," that is, as ye eat bread or drink wine, do it in remembrance of me.

It has been the custom in the East, from time immemorial, for two or

more friends, when about to part for a longer or shorter period, to partake of food as a pledge of indissoluble friendship. And whatever country they visit—however far distant they may be from each other, when food is placed before them, they call to remembrance their mutual attachment to each other. The object of the Jewish passover is admirably turned to confirm this ancient custom. According to the most approved ecclesiastical writers, the primitive Christians, whenever they ate or drank, at all times did it in remembrance of their departed Lord. There is sufficient proof, from the epistles of Paul, to confirm this statement.

You will readily perceive, that there would be a manifest impropriety in the *Millennial Church* partaking of these memorials in remembrance of Christ till he come; as it is an established principle of this body, that *he has come*. Though the memorials of bread and wine might commemorate the Lord's death; yet after the second coming of Christ, there could be no longer a use for these. We have no evidence however, that the primitive Christians consecrated a little bread and wine, and formally distributed it to the assembly or church, and called it the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. This practice was first introduced by the Gentile Philosophers, (as Mosheim says,) to give their religion a mystic air, in order to put it upon an equal footing, in point of dignity, to that of the pagans.

To this may be traced the idea of the mysterious virtues which many have attached to this ceremony. The bread and the wine have been looked upon as symbols of the body and blood of an absent Saviour. But the true church is the body of Christ, and consequently he must be present with it. The church is fed with the bread of life, and refreshed with the water of salvation. This is the spiritual nourishment of the true followers of Christ. They partake of his Spirit and life; and this is what is meant by "the blood of Christ that cleanseth from all sin."

"I am," says Christ, "the bread of life that came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever;—except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." What contentions there have been in the church of anti-christ, about the meaning of these words! On them has been built the imaginary hypothesis of transubstantiation, that those who partake of the consecrated bread and wine, eat the body and drink the blood of Christ! The language of the Saviour was used figuratively. The body and blood signified the life and spirit of Christ, and those who partake of these, live the life that he did. And it is the meat and drink of such to do his will, as it was the meat and drink of Christ to do the will of God. These are they who walk in the light as Christ is in the light, and have fellowship one with another.

The first church at Jerusalem "were of one heart and one soul;" and we have no account that they kept any external sacrament in any other manner than by eating and drinking at the same table from day to day, according to the example of Christ. "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and breaking bread from house to house; did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." This is all the sacrament they observed. And is it strange that the *Millennial Church* established precisely on the same principles, should take them as a pattern in this respect?

Those whose minds are enlightened to see what the true supper of the Lord is, and what Christ's supper with his disciples was designed to typify, and really to partake of the life and spirit of Christ will feel no disposition to contend about shadows and signs, and in this strife, to bear manifestly, the most bitter animosity towards each other. All this has been the result of theological controversies managed by blind guides, who instead of "promoting brotherly kindness, christian charity, and heavenly love," lead the people to cruel hatred, blood and slaughter.

What is called the Lord's Supper has been a prolific source of the most destructive evils. It is, therefore, inconsistent to suppose that Christ established an institution directly calculated to render alien to each other, those who ought to be connected by the bands of perpetual friendship. The pickerings among many denominations about *close communion and open communion*, might be avoided if they were of one heart and one soul; if the rich and the poor met at one table, and cheerfully partook of one common blessing, mutually sharing in each other's comforts and afflictions. This is partaking of the Lord's Supper in very deed, according to the manner of the primitive church. Instead of contending about nothing, professed Christians would act more consistently to come out of Babylon, and joyfully enter the gates of the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, and thus enjoy that communion that can be obtained from no other source.

I see nothing but inconsistency in the anti-christian world. Whilst they make a pompous display of the bread and the wine, they totally disregard a real institution of the Saviour, which he enjoined by precept and example. "Supper being ended, Jesus rose from the table and laid aside his garments, and took a towel and girded himself. After that, he poureth the water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel, wherewith he was girded. So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done unto you? Ye call me Master and Lord—and ye say well; for so I am. If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet: *for I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.*" How could there be a more positive injunction than this? Why then is the practice of washing each other's feet totally neglected. Whilst the sacrament of eating bread and drinking wine, is punctiliously regarded? The fact is, one is a humiliating exercise, whilst the other better comports with pride and vanity.

By this example, Christ teaches us a weighty lesson, a lesson of humility, and no one could condescend to wash another's feet without measurably feeling this virtue in exercise. Some contend that Christ did not enjoin a literal performance of this ceremony; but there is sufficient evidence that it was practiced by the early Christians. Paul required it of widows as a condition of admittance to the communion of the church; "*If she have washed the saints' feet.*"

There is something consistent with true dignity in the condescension of the Saviour. How exactly did his conduct on that occasion, comport with the principles of his doctrine. What could be better calculated to impress on the minds of his disciples, the divine virtue of humility? Here is a glorious pattern for imitation. May we both be instructed by such a heavenly precept, and cordially reduce to practice so precious an example.

B. I heartily unite with you in considering the circumstance of Christ's washing the disciple's feet, one of the most impressive instances of true humility recorded in the scriptures. It is forcibly inculcated both by the precept and example of Christ. I can see no propriety in neglecting this ceremony, whilst that of eating bread and drinking wine, is looked upon as indispensable. I must say that your remarks on baptism and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, are altogether satisfactory to my mind. But as you have let fall a number of expressions which imply a belief in a progressive state of improvement in the invisible world, I should like to hear your views on that important subject.

M. I hope that an opportunity will soon present itself favorable to such an object. In the meantime, you will please to receive my best wishes for your highest happiness, both in this world and that which is to come. Farewell.

DIALOGUE XIV.

B. I have waited, with some degree of impatience, for an opportunity to hear your views on the subject which was proposed in our last interview. There are some passages of scripture which appear to clash with the belief of any alteration in the moral condition of mankind in a future world. The first text that I shall quote, you may find in Ecc. ixth ch. and 10th verse. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest." The letter of this scripture appears to purport that the general destiny of mankind is fixed at death. Almost every denomination have adopted this sentiment; and it is very strange that this should be the case, if there were not the most convincing proof from the scriptures of its correctness.

M. The letter of the passage you have quoted, if it prove any thing in regard to a future state, establishes the doctrine of annihilation, inasmuch as it is impossible to exist without knowing it. It is said there is no knowledge in the grave. This being the case, there can be neither happiness nor misery in a future world, for can a person be happy and not know it; or can there be any positive misery where there is no knowledge? Let those who contend that this scripture refers to the state of immortal spirits beyond the grave,—answer this question.

It is probable that Solomon, or whoever wrote this passage, was a Sadducee, and did not believe in a future existence. He says, verse 5, "For the living know that they shall die; *but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward, for the memory of them is perished.*" If we admit this to be inspiration, the writer directly contradicts a sentiment, which most professed Christians hold very essential; for in addition to the dead being destitute of either knowledge or wisdom, he directly affirms that "*they have no more a reward.*"

The writer was doubtless reasoning on the state of the dead, showing that it is impossible for such, either to devise or execute any measure for the benefit of mankind. Verse 4th, "For a living dog is better than a dead lion;" "for to him that is joined to all the living, there is hope." The sentiment appears to be this,—If we can do but little to improve

our own condition and that of others, *let us do it with our might*, or let us work while the day lasts; for the night of death approaches, wherein no man can work. We have but a short time allotted us; it is, therefore, necessary that every moment should be usefully employed. When dead we become entirely inactive, and are not capable of doing either good or hurt. This is the only sentiment conveyed in the passage you have quoted. Although this is admitted to be the state of the dead, yet according to the declaration or promise of Christ, all the dead shall hear his voice and come forth, where there is device, knowledge and wisdom, which plainly proves that their state is not fixed.

B. There are many that go out of the world blaspheming God, some in the very act of the foulest crimes, and others die in a state of intoxication. There does not appear to be any reasonable ground of hope, that ever the condition of these will be altered for the better. At least, this is a sentiment that almost generally prevails concerning the final condition of these characters.

M. I will allow that a great many go out of the world in the condition you have described. It is deeply to be lamented that this is the case. But still, if it can be proved that there is no change that can possibly take place beyond the grave, the person who dies in a state of intoxication must remain drunk to all eternity. A person may blaspheme the name of God at one time, and at another become so changed as to tender to Him the most devout thanksgiving and praise. I know of no evidence from the Bible that the work of regeneration does not progress in a future world as well as in this. Besides, the dictates of enlightened reason utterly condemn the opposite sentiment, notwithstanding it is as you say, the common received opinion. What hope can we have of Solomon, who if we credit his biographers, was one of the greatest libertines that ever lived; and thus he passed off the stage of action. And even David died under the influence of the passion of revenge. Do you think he still retains that passion? This is the case, if there is no alteration in him. Such a sentiment involves even greater absurdities. Infants will be blanks in Heaven. The whole heathen world comprising nineteen thirtieths of the human family, will forever be ignorant of Christ and his gospel, who, from the very circumstance of their being, could not believe in Him of whom they never heard in this life. The first philosophers of antiquity will forever be ingulphed in midnight darkness! A Socrates, a Seneca, a Plato, a Diogenes, and a Confucius, notwithstanding they shone so bright in their day, instead of tuning their harps to the high praises of heaven's eternal King, now people the dark regions of despair, and experience a measure of the bitter agonies of eternal death. All these absurdities and many more that might be mentioned, arise from the supposition, that divine light is not communicated to the human soul beyond the tomb.

B. There is another passage on which I wish to hear your comments. "If the tree fall toward the south or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be." This scripture is supposed to confirm the belief that the condition of mankind is fixed according to their respective characters at death.

M. This passage is usually quoted with an appendage, as follows, "as death leaves us, so judgment finds us." There are thousands who can hardly be persuaded but what the above addition is of divine au-

thority. This spurious coin passes current among many congregations that "pin their faith on their minister's sleeve." But when people undertake to make scripture, they should be sure to have it more consistent with the sentiment which it is their object to sustain. Now I would ask, whether a person is alive or dead when death leaves him?

B. I cannot give you a consistent answer unless I say it leaves him alive.

M. Then it is evident that judgment finds the person alive. Amidst all the blunders of a blundering priesthood, they have blundered into one truth. For it is a bible doctrine that, "Now is the judgment of this world." The day that God hath appointed in which to judge this world by that man whom he hath ordained, has already commenced. In reference to the day or dispensation of Christ's second appearing, it was positively declared that "the saints should judge the world." There is no contradiction in the divine testimony on this subject, as it has been demonstrated to you that Christ appears in the saints. This is the judgment seat of Christ; and to this, mankind must, sooner or later, come.

As the common view of the judgment robs the Almighty of the attribute of mercy, it also exhibits the greatest inequality in the ways of God. All have not the same opportunity to make a choice. As before observed, nineteen thirtieths of mankind are pagans. There remain eleven parts, six of which are Mahometans. Only five thirtieths of the human race are called Christian nations. Now is there any equality in arraigning twenty-five thirtieths of the human family before the judgment, on purpose to pass on them the sentence of *unending woe*, and that too in consequence of their not believing in Christ and receiving his gospel?

Again, mankind are taken out of the world at every age; and it is supposed that the decision at the judgment will be according to character. Now, we will suppose there are two children struck with the electric fluid and immediately die. One perhaps has purloined an apple, or a pin, or perhaps told a fib. The other has not been guilty of these or any other improprieties. No alteration after death. They are both brought before the judgment. The one is received to glory, whilst the other is consigned to remediless woe! There is neither mercy nor impartiality in such a retribution as this. It is altogether repugnant to reason; and the scriptures, when correctly understood give no countenance to such a groundless hypothesis. This sentiment must have originated from the lowest depths of profound darkness.

There are many who live in the unrestrained indulgence of every sinful propensity to a very advanced period of life. They then repent, and are supposed to be acquitted in the general judgment. Others, not having their lives protracted to such an advanced period, receive the sentence of condemnation at the same time. Is it not easy to perceive that each, at least, should have an equal time of probation? And yet, God hath said, "Are not my ways equal, are not your ways unequal?" View this subject in what light you will, the evidence is overwhelming, in favor of a future state of progressive improvement.

Solomon, in the connection of the passage you have quoted, urged the necessity of deeds of charity. "Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days"—"Give a portion to seven and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth." We are apprised of the impossibility of officiating in these kind offices after

we are cut down by death. This is the substance of what he meant to convey ; and yet this scripture is pressed into the service of those who hold that probation ends with this state of being !

B. I would now cite you to the declaration of Christ himself, recorded in John 8: 21. "Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come." Notwithstanding you have made your views appear reasonable, yet if they are condemned by Christ, it would be exceedingly hazardous to adopt them.

M. You have assumed as a truth, what is the main point in dispute. The words of Christ by no means contradict my argument. In order to sustain the sentiment, that there is no renovation after the dissolution of the body, the passage has been misquoted—"And *if* ye die in your sins, where I go, ye can *never* come." The words *if* and *never*, they have supplied. The Saviour mentioned no *if*. His discourse was directed to the Jews, and he denounced on them a judgment contained in the divine law. But you would do well to notice, that natural death is not implied. Moral death was threatened as the sure consequence of their obduracy and impiety. Jesus unquestionably had his mind on a passage recorded in Ezekiel, "And in their trespasses which they have trespassed, and in their sins which they have sinned, in them *shall* they die." But immediately afterwards he says, "If they repent and return, they shall live, they shall not die." But according to the common explanation of the passage you have quoted, the condition of those who die in sin is irreversibly fixed. This is an error, or there is the grossest inconsistency in the language of the prophet, that is almost literally quoted by Christ.

B. But admitting you are correct in this, and I believe you are, the closing part of the passage quoted is very plain and forcible. "Whither I go ye cannot come." I will allow there is a wide difference between "*cannot come*" and "*can never come*;" but still if they cannot come to Christ, their condition must be fixed in sin, and consequently misery.

M. I am willing to give an opponent's argument every consideration it merits, and therefore I am ready to meet you in your own citadel. It is an established principle in logic, that an "argument that proves too much, proves nothing to the point." I mistake if you do not soon find yourself in this dilemma. Do you believe that the followers of Jesus will ever go where Christ is ?

B. I certainly do ; and besides, there are none who make the least pretensions to Christianity will deny this.

M. You will please to read the 33d verse of the 13th chapter of John.

B. "Little children, yet a little while I am with you ; ye shall seek me, and as I said unto the Jews, whither I go ye cannot come : so now I say to you."

M. You perceive that the language is as strong in the one case as the other. If it be argued that Jesus, in answer to Peter, said, "Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards;" I answer, there are promises equally as conclusive and strong in relation to the Jews. The fact is, the disciples all forsook Christ in the trying hour ; and Peter among the rest. There was but one door of entrance into the celestial city ; and the disciples appeared to be as ignorant of the way of salvation, as the Jews themselves. The time was

yet future for Christ to be revealed in the fulness of his character. This long predicted day has arrived in which the mystery of God will be finished, or made manifest to all nations, the Jews not excepted. This is evident from what Paul says in Rom. xi : 25. "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, (lest ye should be wise in your own conceits) that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." *"And so all Israel shall be saved."*

B. I am well satisfied with your explanation of these passages, and feel to rejoice that you have succeeded in removing these objections to a future state of progressive improvement. Your arguments are reasonable and conclusive. I beg you to have patience with me. There is another portion of the divine testimony which appears to militate against your views, on which I wish to hear your comments. Rev. xxii : 11. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still ; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still ; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still ; and he that is holy, let him be holy still."

M. The passage you have quoted has nothing to do with the final state of any. By a little more reflection on this subject, and a reference to the whole book of the Apocalypse, you will perceive that John had seen the rise of the Church of Christ's first appearing, and had in a measure witnessed its declension or the growing power of anti-christ. He also saw in his vision the rise of the beast which carried the whore ; the treading down of the holy city, and the awful devastation of the truth caused by the setting up of the abomination of desolation. He also saw the new heaven and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness ; and lastly, the holy city adorned in her transcendent beauty, at which period, the consummation of all the promises of God to man, were verified and fulfilled. After John had seen and heard all this, (as he says) he "was about to fall down and worship at the feet of Him who had shown him these things." Then he received the declaration you have quoted. The spirit that showed him all this, knew that the night had commenced, and was swiftly advancing, as Christ said, in which "no man can work." It would be in vain to cleanse the filthy in the dark, therefore he said, "he that is filthy, let him be filthy ; and he that is holy, let him be holy ; and behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me to give every man according as his works shall be." Here it is evident that he meant to declare—that the work which had then begun to decline would come to an end ; and that he would bring in the work of the latter day conveyed the idea.

A figurative description is given of the great city, "the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God." This city "had a wall, great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates, twelve angels, and the names written thereon which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel." "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without, are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." Rev. xxii : 14, 15. The scripture you quoted has a direct reference to these characters. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth ; for the first heaven and first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea." Rev. xxi : 1. This has reference to the ecclesiastical and

civil polity of the Jews, and the order of the new dispensation that succeeded. "And I John saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband," and should you or any other person contend that it stopped somewhere short of the earth, I would cite you to what immediately follows. "And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, *Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men*, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."

Now it will be very difficult to prove that those who were to be *unjust and filthy still*, were in the world of spirits. If this were the case, it follows that there are dogs, and sorcerers there, as well as whoremongers, murderers and idolaters! I am ready to acknowledge that if the holy city be in the next world, those who are without, are there also. But it has been proved to a demonstration, that the former is in this world. The latter must be, of course. The scripture you quoted utterly fails of establishing the common notion, that the benefits of the gospel may not extend even to those who die in a state of impenitence.

B. I might quote many other passages that are generally construed to discountenance your views. But I am satisfied myself that they fail of supporting the prevailing opinion, and as every candid person must acknowledge the views of the *United Society* to be reasonable on this weighty subject, I do not feel inclined to pursue the discussion of this point any farther. I hope to have the privilege of hearing your views on some other principles connected with the subject under consideration, as soon as convenient.

M. I feel encouraged to gratify that wish, and sincerely hope that the blessing of God may attend the pleasing interviews we have had. It should be our first desire to know the whole truth, and to conform our lives to its dictates.

DIALOGUE XV.

B. It is impossible to conceive of a more important subject than that of the judgment. I perceive by several of your observations that you discard the idea of a day of judgment. The scriptures, in a great variety of places, speak of it. We read of "*the judgment of the great day*," that "God hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness." Are these scriptures to be set aside?

M. The *United Society* by no means, set aside the scriptures you have quoted; nor have I discarded the idea of a day of judgment. But to my apprehension, those who hold to a day of general judgment immediately succeeding, as is supposed, the literal resurrection of all the dead, labor under a most egregious error. I have before given you my views in part on this subject. I would apprise you now that it is a sentiment held sacred by the *United Society*, that every work, together with every secret thing, will sooner or later, be brought into judgment. This truth is not only confirmed by observation, but it is the subject of prophecy, both in the Old and New Testament.

This not only has reference to individuals, but to nations and smaller communities. The Assyrian and Persian monarchies both arrived at the very zenith of earthly grandeur ; but they became proud, voluptuous and cruel. A succession of prophets arose and denounced upon them, the rigorous judgments of Almighty God. The destruction of Idumea, of Ninevah and Babylon, was long foretold. These prophecies, according to the ancient manner, were highly figurative. It is not uncommon for preachers who *boast* of their erudition and piety, to apply the figures of speech used by the prophets on these occasions, to an awful event which they suppose will take place at the conflagration of this material world.

I once listened to a discourse from a learned divine, on these words : "Judgments are prepared for the scorner, and stripes for the back of fools." After a very formal introduction, in which the audience were apprised of the very solemn subject, "of which he was about to deliver himself," he descanted largely on the tremendous doom which awaited those who were so unfortunate as to be fools. I thought in my soul, that the stripes prepared for such, could be laid on, in a period of time, a little short of eternity. But this was very far from being the opinion of the preacher. Eternity was too short according to his argument, to do full justice to such characters. But what was wanting in time, he made up in degree. He was not satisfied with a merciless flagellation in the ordinary way. He had been taught at College how to use figures to give ornament to a discourse. He said that revenge was a hereditary principle in the aborigines of this country. They exult in fiendish triumph over the calamities of their enemies. "When a prisoner falls into their hands," said he, "they exert all the power of invention to put him to death in the most cruel manner. They tear his eyes from their sockets ; they cut his fingers and toes off joint by joint ; they stick slivers of pitch wood in his flesh, and set them on fire. This lingering torture gives them the greatest satisfaction." "But," said he, "all this is tender mercy and mild compassion, compared with the stripes which God has prepared for the back of fools!" The Lord have mercy on the preacher! The time was not far distant when stripes were faithfully laid on his back. Not, however, such as he had described ; but without doubt, they were every way satisfactory to him. I would not wish to treat with levity the religious opinions of others ; but it becomes a duty at this time, to show the absurdity of the prevailing opinion concerning a future general judgment in as clear a light as possible.

B. Paul says, "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after death, the judgment." It appears from this that the death of man is of divine appointment, and it is equally evident that the judgment is also appointed which is after death.

M. It probably was not your intention to misquote the words of Paul. But if you will take the trouble to turn to this scripture, you will perceive that you have given the passage a turn which the connection will by no means, justify. I will present it before you with the connection. "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the *figures* of the true ; but into heaven itself ; there to appear in the presence of God for us ; now yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year, with blood of others ; for then must we often have suffered since the foundation of the world ; but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to

put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after *this*, the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him, shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Heb. ix: 24—28. It is evident here that Paul was reasoning on the figurative import of the Jewish ceremonies. It was the practice of the High Priest to enter the *sanctum sanctorum*, or the holy place, once a year with his proxy, or as it is said, "with the blood of others." This death of the High Priest was of "divine appointment," and in a striking manner, prefigured the shedding of the blood of Christ. Both the death of the High Priest by his sacrifice, and the judgments which followed, pointed directly to the perfect work of reconciliation under the gospel.

It is proper that you should observe that the house of Israel confessed their sins over the head of the scape-goat, the High Priest entering into the holy place with the national sacrifice, the goat bore their sins away to the wilderness, or land of forgetfulness. This was the place of judgment under the law. But it is easy to see that this could not reach the conscience, or in other words, "make the comers thereunto perfect." If you turn to the Greek Testament, you will perceive, that instead of *men*, it is *the men*. The article is not retained in the received version. This essentially alters the sense. The true reading is altogether favorable to my views, and consistent with the chain of reasoning in the whole chapter. "And as it is appointed unto the men once to die, but after *this*, the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." It is astonishing to me that any person of discernment should not at once, discover the impropriety of applying this passage to the natural death of mankind, and to a future day of general judgment.

I will admit that mankind must be brought into judgment. This is the unalterable decree of Heaven. "Every work shall be brought into judgment, together with every secret thing, whether it be good or bad." But as it was to the order of the priesthood that the Jews were required to make confession, and bring their hidden abominations to light, we discover in this a striking illustration of the judgment that should be established under the gospel. "What! know ye not," says Paul, "that the saints shall judge the world?" 1st Cor. vi: 2. In the seventh chapter of Daniel, mention is made of the work of judgment in the latter day. "The kingdom and greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; and the judgment was set, and the books were opened." No one can rationally suppose that the Almighty has books in which he literally records the actions of mankind. Such a conclusion is entertained by none who form correct views of the divine character. His memory does not require the aid of such artificial means. The conscience is the book in which every action is inscribed. During that judgment that has already commenced, these books must all be opened, and every work be brought to light according to the order which God has established. This sentiment is clearly exhibited by Paul; "Some men's sins are opened before hand, going before to judgment; and some men, they follow after."

B. Admitting these figures or prophecies had their fulfillment in the accomplishment of the judgment upon those places; yet it appears from the 23d, 24th and 25th of Matth. there is an allusion to the general judgment and the circumstances attending it.

M. In the 23d and 24th chapters of Matthew, no allusion is made to the general judgment, if we consider that the day of judgment was not to commence until after Christ should make his second appearing; notwithstanding Christ says in the 23d chap. "that all the blood, from the blood of Zacharias, shall be required of this generation." It had allusion only to literal judgments that should come upon the Jews and other nations of the earth, before his second appearing.

As the Jews were represented as a figure, from the beginning, of the true people of God in the work of redemption, so those literal temporal judgments upon the Jews and their nation, as a literal church, were figurative of those spiritual judgments which the church brought upon themselves, by the setting up of the abomination which made desolate. The subject matter taken up in the 24th chapter, arises from three questions propounded by the disciples to Jesus. 1st. When shall these things be? 2d. What is the sign of thy coming? 3d, and the end of the world?

In answering these questions, He showed them first, the circumstances attending the apostacy, saying, "Take heed that no man deceive you, for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ and shall deceive many." This leads on to the subject then under discussion. In the 15th verse he gives a clue to the subject to demonstrate what he wished them to understand. "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place. *Let him that readeth, understand.*" It is evident that the abomination that maketh desolate, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, was set up in the holy place, under Pope Leo, A. D. 460, as was fully proved and clearly shown in our second dialogue. This shows that Christ alluded to the question, What shall be the sign of thy coming? It was proper in answering this question, to inform them, that he would first disappear before he could come again. This he endeavored to inculcate into their minds: "If any man shall say unto you, Lo here is Christ, or lo there, believe it not;" by which he unequivocally intimated that Christ could not be found on the earth during the apostacy, because he would be absent for a season.

After relating the circumstantial events that should take place during the period of his absence, such as the destruction of Jerusalem and the nation of the Jews, and the wars, famines, pestilences and earthquakes, that were to transpire in divers places; and the setting up of the abomination under Pope Leo, as before stated, we read, "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn (because of the great cross required in his second appearing) and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory." This answers the question, "What shall be the sign of thy coming?" Our Saviour then proceeds: "Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." In referring to the Greek original, it appears that the word *generation*, may with equal propriety be translated *age* or *dispensation*. Now if you will refer again to our second dialogue, you can but see that the generation, age, or dispensation of Christ's first appearing, did not pass until the commencement of a new or second dispensation, which began to be established A. D. 1750. There can be no definite period to a generation, age or dispensation, until it ends or passes away, and a new dispensation or age commences.

In reply to the third question, When shall be the end of the world?

the answer is short—"Of that day and hour knoweth no man; no, not even the angels of Heaven." But our Saviour informs them how it should be in the day of his coming—"As were the days of Noe, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. They were eating and drinking, *marrying and giving in marriage*, until Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and swept them all away. So shall the coming of the Son of Man be." Thus it is evident, that his coming was so out of their sight, that they knew it not till they felt those judgments that were denounced upon them.

In the 25th chapter, there are certain passages which allude to the second coming of Christ, the marriage of the Lamb, which is emphatically the day of judgment; but no allusion whatever is made to a literal judgment, or resurrection of dead bodies, to appear, according to the general received opinion of nominal professors of Christianity.

B. I admit, from your remarks, there is no positive proof to support what is commonly held to be the general judgment, in those chapters. There are other scriptures which appear to support it, particularly the 4th, 11th, and 12th verses of Rev. 20—"I saw thrones, and they set upon them, and judgment was given unto them. And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and heavens fled away, and there was found no place for them; and I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of Life, and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Any light you can show me upon these scriptures, will be very acceptable, and gratefully received.

M. As the scriptures abound with positive testimony of, or concerning the true judgment, and as the *United Society* hold to the true judgment of the great day, I trust I may succeed in elucidating this very important point in such a manner as to meet your understanding fully—"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them and judgment was given unto them." If according to the opinion of many, God and Christ sit on the throne for judgment, I ask, *Who it is that delegates the power of judgment to them?* The prophet Daniel answers the question. "I beheld and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them, until the ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High, and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom." Dan. vii. 21, 22. Here you will see that the true place for judgment is in the saints of the Most High, who being placed in judgment, are metaphorically placed on thrones. But perhaps you may infer we are not right in this opinion; presuming that the 11th and 12th verses, which you have just quoted, militate strongly against this position. I am aware that this scripture may be construed by some as indicating a literal resurrection and judgment; but it would be proper to consider firstly, that it is impossible to communicate the idea of spiritual things to the mind, without having recourse to such language as is adapted to the natural senses; and if the mind is as natural as the ear, that receives and hears the expression, no doubt it will claim a literal fulfillment; but a mind spiritually cultivated, will conceive that these are metaphorical expressions to communicate spiritual things. In the scripture before us, we have the terms *white throne, books, dead, &c.* If we are to understand this to be a literal throne, of what materials is it composed? It is said,

it is a white throne ; and what white materials can be found in the elements of nature which can compose a throne for the Almighty to sit upon ? This is a literal idea. We read 19th Rev. verse 14th, "That the armies which followed him that sat upon the white horse, were clothed in *fine linen, white and clean.*" In the 8th verse, it is said, "that *the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints.*" These are the materials of which the white throne is composed, viz. The saints clothed in white linen, which is the righteousness of the saints. This is according to the promise of God, "I will live in them and walk in them ; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people," and farther to demonstrate these truths, I will add the words of our Saviour—"He that loveth me will keep my words, and my Father will love him ; we will come and make our abode with him." It is therefore evident, that the white throne seen by John, was the saints, clothed in righteousness and purity, in whom God and Christ had made their abode, according to his promise. And it was before this throne, that the dead, small and great, were to appear for judgment. Who are the dead ? The natural man, or believers in a literal resurrection, will say the dead has reference to the demise of the animal body. The spiritual man will say, it is "the soul that sinneth that shall die ;" therefore "death has passed upon all, in that all have sinned." Thus it is, the soul that is the subject of that death which came by sin, and of course is brought before this tribunal or white throne for judgment. The next enquiry is, what are those books that are opened ? It will be proper here to observe, those who are called to judgment before God on this white throne, revealed in his saints, must give an account for the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or whether they be evil," and no soul can ultimately evade or escape this summons. Hence it is evident that the consciences of those who are called to judgment, are the books spoken of ; for there are the deeds recorded, and no where else. There can be no conscious act of transgression whatever ; but what is impressed upon the soul which can never be obliterated or effaced, until it is brought to judgment, to the saints in the order of God's appointment.

From what has been said already, it will be superfluous here to attempt to show that the Book of Life is not a literal book ; yet it will be proper, to show what it is. In the common version we read, "another book was opened, which is the *book of life* ;" but by recourse to the Greek testament, we find the original reads, "another book was opened, which is *the Life.*" This is called the book of the life of the Lamb, which is the testimony of eternal truth by which he lived ; for it is evident that his life was in exact conformity to his testimony, and this is the *word*, which he said shall judge you at the last day. It is therefore evident, that "the saints are they that have the word of God and keep the testimony of Jesus Christ." Thus the saints are sitting in judgment, and are in possession of the testimony of Jesus Christ, or the *Life*, by which is judged and tried, all that is contained in those other books, or the consciences of those that come before the throne. This is the true and only judgment of the great day. Now after all the evidence here adduced, who will dare be so presumptuous as to say they will not bring their deeds to the light of man ; and more especially when it must be admitted that God has seated himself upon this throne, composed of saints, for the final judgment of every soul.

A query may arise with some, whether these saints are inhabitants of this world. A reference to what has before been stated in a former dia-

logue, will show that the New Jerusalem is established in this world, and that the saints are the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem. "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men."

Thrice happy is that people, who, by an honest confession, bring their sins to the spirit of judgment, and are separated from them by the purifying fire of the gospel. This work will never cease until the purpose of God is fully accomplished. "It will prove efficacious in its operations, and will be made manifest in the conviction of evil of every description, and in the full developement of error of every kind, whether in *judgment, opinion or practice.*"

The consideration of the certainty of every work being brought into judgment, is of vast more importance than the place where, or the time when it shall be accomplished. I know of no passage in the scriptures that is more impressive, and at the same time more clearly demonstrates the truth of this suggestion than the following: "Rejoice O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; *but know thou, that for all these things, God will bring thee into judgment.*" Eccl. x. 11. Let the youth be admonished by the language of inspiration, and by the infirmities of premature old age, that afford conclusive evidence of this important truth. Let the aged view their lives in retrospection and faithfully warn the youth to avoid those practices that have a direct tendency to enervate both the mind and the body. Let all receive instruction by the events that are continually passing before them, in which they may discover an illustration of this important truth, that God will not suffer vice to go unpunished, or virtue unrewarded. And as it is a fact that none can obtain happiness that is worthy of the name, short of a strict conformity to the purity of the divine requirements, let none indulge the delusive hope that their souls can find rest short of this. Imagination has invented a thousand ways, and the giddy multitude are eagerly pursuing as many courses, in the expectation of reaching the summit of joy; but they follow a shadow that continually eludes their grasp. Divine Wisdom has taught us in a few words, the direct way to happiness and glory; and aside from this, the object cannot be obtained here nor hereafter. "He that *confesseth and forsaketh* his sins shall have mercy." To this test all must come, or never enter the gates of the celestial city.

Having presented to you the outlines of the principles and practices of the *United Society*, called Shakers, I now beseech you to examine them carefully. Do not make up your judgment hastily, but whatsoever things are pure, honest, lovely and of good report, think on these things. I have studied simplicity of language, and used my best endeavors to give the substance of our views in as brief a manner as possible. There are many that feel but little interest in the perusal of any theological work, and consequently have not been disposed to examine the publications that have already appeared, illustrative of the doctrine of this *peculiar people.*

It has been my object to lay before you, those weighty truths that produced conviction on my mind, and brought me to a stand, as to the propagation of sentiments, which in any measure came in contact with the fundamental principles that have been presented for your consideration.

But few in comparison with the great mass of human society, have come into the order of the *Millennial Church*; but still, such are the union and harmony that characterize this body, that they combine the

greatest moral strength on the face of the globe. It is not like a meteor, that dazzles for a moment, and is then gone ; but like the sun in his course, it moves on in its heavenly journey, above the fluctuating changes of every worldly establishment. Here is an everlasting kingdom of righteousness, love and peace. Christ, the anointed Saviour, is the life and power of this order ; and as he is the Captain of our salvation, as he is the divine Leader in this heavenly contest, all opposition must finally fall before Him.

Those who are in reality in this work, have an undoubted assurance that it is of God, and that they are moving on under the divine protection. They may meet with annoyance, but they can never experience a discomfiture. The fearful, the timid, and irresolute may faint by the way, and in some instances lay down their arms ; but victory will crown the valiant and faithful. Their songs will be those of triumph and rejoicing. A complete salvation from the corruptions of a fallen nature, will be the unfailing portion of all who follow the "two anointed ones" in the straight and narrow way which they travelled. All the powers of darkness can never frustrate the designs of the Almighty, or impede the truth in its glorious progress.

Let the sons and daughters of Zion gird on the celestial panoply, unappalled at the formidable front of the numerous hosts of the adversary. With their feet shod with the preparation of the gospel, their loins girt about with truth, with the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, they need not fear nor be dismayed. It is a lamentable truth, that "*the whole world lieth in wickedness.*" Mankind are quietly reposing in sin, and nothing can arouse them from their lethargy but the "voice of the Archangel and the trump of God." A sound, like peals of seven-fold thunder, will sooner or later awake them to a sense of the all-important testimony witnessed by Christ both in his first and second appearing. A deaf ear may be turned for a season to the truths of the gospel, but the time will soon come when "the waters will overflow the hiding places, and the hail will sweep away the refuges of lies." The covenant which the sons of darkness have made with death, will be dissolved, and their agreement with hell will not stand. The dissolute and the vain may point the finger of scorn at the "*little few*" who labor to gain a relationship to the worthies who have gone before them ; but as long as they walk in the light, such contempt from such sources, will excite no other sensation than that of undissembled pity. The wise and pure in heart and life, will see them as they really are, enveloped in a cloud as dark as Erebus. The thoughtless and the gay may smile, but this is no sure index to the state of their feelings. The discerning know that their hearts are pierced through with indescribable sorrow !

The testimony of truth has been opened with sufficient clearness, and you have been compelled in repeated instances, to acknowledge your inability to confront the principles adopted and reduced to practice by this order. If you reject them, it is because you voluntarily choose the gratification of the passions at the sacrifice of that pure enjoyment which does not grow in the garden of nature. I again entreat of you to give this subject that consideration which its importance demands. Suffer no object of an inferior nature to influence your decision, and you will find by happy experience, that notwithstanding we are required to sacrifice

every carnal indulgence, the pure enjoyment received, infinitely outweighs the whole.

B. I have made no concession, in the course of our interviews, to which I was not compelled by a sense of duty. There seems to be a consistency in your views, that powerfully appeals to the conscience and understanding. I have been led to an examination of the New Testament in relation to your views of Christian celibacy. There is one objection which I omitted to mention at the time that subject was under discussion. St. Paul, in his first epistle to Timothy, gave him the following instruction: "This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work—A bishop then must be blameless, *the husband of one wife.*" The same injunction was laid on the deacons. It appears from this, that matrimony was by no means discountenanced by the apostle.

M. I am glad you have brought up this objection at this time, as it will give me an opportunity to present before you one of the strongest evidences in the New Testament in favor of what it has been your object to oppose.

It appears from the passage you have quoted, that polygamy, or a *plurality* of wives, characterized the people to whom Timothy was commissioned to preach. This fully accounts for the indulgence granted by the apostle to bishops and deacons. I wish you to keep in mind, that the time had not then arrived for all to be reined up to the order observed by the first church at Jerusalem. Paul well knew that they could come to this only by a progressive travail; and the first step towards it was, for those who had had many wives, to be contented with one. It is evident, however, that there were many, both male and female, that imitated both Christ and Paul, in living lives of perfect chastity. Timothy was admonished against taking certain characters into this number, through fear of their bringing a reproach on so holy a profession. Among them, he particularly mentions *young widows*. "But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry; having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith."

B. I have always concluded that Paul was speaking in this connection on the proper objects of charity, that none were to be benefitted by the donations of the church, but such as were over sixty years of age.

M. This is a very singular construction, to be sure, that none could be suitable objects of charity, unless they were over sixty years of age! It is a rotten prop to sustain a miserable cause. I am positively ashamed to hear so flimsy an argument from a person of your discernment. I wish you to examine the passage last quoted, more critically. "For when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry, having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith." Their waxing wanton, and marrying, were *against Christ*; and they had damnation in consequence of having cast off their *first faith*, which could have been nothing short of a solemn pledge to live a life of continency. This is a fair conclusion, and the only one that can be drawn from the passage, with the least semblance of propriety.

I would now present to you my views in relation to the subject under discussion, in a few words, together with the request that you would call to mind the arguments already offered for your consideration, in support of the correctness of this peculiarity of the *United Society*. You have

acknowledged yourself fully convinced of the truth of every other point that has been agitated in this discussion, and I can but think that if you should honestly confess the convictions of your mind, you would say that the evidence is overwhelming in favor of the decided stand believers have taken against "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life."

It has been demonstrated to you, that there have been four dispensations, in which it has pleased the Almighty to manifest his truth to the human mind. These were revealed to the prophet Ezekiel in the vision of the holy waters, which issued from the east end of the temple. The man who had a line in his hand, went forth eastward and measured a thousand cubits, and the waters were to the ancles. Again he measured another thousand cubits, and the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and the waters were to the loins. He measured another thousand, and it became a river—"waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over." Ezekiel xlvii. The first division of the holy waters, alludes to the period of time from Adam to Moses. The second, from Moses to Christ. The third, from Christ to the time of his appearing in the female. And the fourth division, has reference to the glorious day in which we have the happiness to live. The work of this day will never cease until the close of the "times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began."

Under the first dispensation, from Adam to Moses, God commanded man to "increase and multiply." Under the second, from Moses to Christ, the work of the flesh was tolerated with severe restrictions. Under the third, from the first to the second appearing of Christ, it was permitted in the church in relation to those only who were unable to come into the perfect order of Christ, and their spiritual condition corresponded with that of outer court worshippers under the law.

In the fourth and last display of God's grace to fallen man, sexual intercourse is utterly forbidden. In the preceding dispensation, the waters were to the loins. Of course, mankind could either wade or swim; but under the last, the "waters were risen." There is no possibility of fording these mighty waters. Thousands are standing on the margin of this stream, and expatiating on the healing virtue of its waters; but their feet are too firmly fixed on "*terra firma*," or they have not sufficient fortitude boldly to launch out into this boundless river, and solace themselves in those pure delights which are above the earth, and every thing appertaining to it. They have a glimpse of the river of life, and long to bathe in its waters. Some advance so far, that its waters reach the ancles; but by far the greater number remain upon the brink. But a few launch out into the profound depths of heavenly beatitude and experience the fruition of pure enjoyment, by conforming their lives to the example of the two anointed Ones, who stand continually before the God of the whole earth. What say you? Does not true wisdom dictate to you the proper course to pursue? Do you not plainly discover that you have nothing to lose but dross? And surely, the sooner you get rid of that, the better.

B. Although I am convinced in my judgment that you are correct, yet I do not see how it is possible for me to come into the order of the *United Society*. There seem to be numerous difficulties in the way,

which render it almost impossible for one in my situation, to come into the enjoyment of the privileges of your communion.

M. I feel thankful that you have advanced so far. It is as much as I expected, when our interview commenced. Conviction is the first step, and this you acknowledge you have. It is now necessary that you should commence your journey, a travail which you must sooner or later have, and the sooner you begin, the sooner you will come to your journey's end. In this pilgrimage, you will experience the divine protection; and however numerous and great the difficulties with which you will have to contend, the arm of the Almighty will carry you through. The farther you advance in this heavenly life, the more insignificant every worldly object will appear. You will be baptized into the spirit of the gospel, and the very element of your soul will be in a conformation to the example of Christ. It will be your meat and drink to do his will, as it was his to do the will of God.

I now bid you an affectionate farewell.

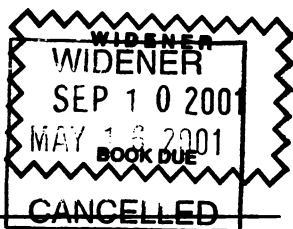
B. Farewell.

ERRATA.—Page 60, For *right hand of heirship*, read *right of heirship*.
 In a part of the edition the following errors occurred :
 On page 85, for *head*, read *lead*
 Pages 85, 86, for *McNeman* read *McNemar*.
 Page 89, for *Waterlict*, read *Waterleit*.
 Page 89, for *Mencham*, read *Meacham*.
 Page 96, for *were*, read *are*.

The borrower must return this item on or before the last date stamped below. If another user places a recall for this item, the borrower will be notified of the need for an earlier return.

*Non-receipt of overdue notices does **not** exempt the borrower from overdue fines.*

Harvard College Widener Library Cambridge, MA 02138 617-495-2413
--



Please handle with care.
Thank you for helping to preserve
library collections at Harvard.

